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# DRAMATIC DAYS AT THE OLD BAILEY

BY  
CHARLES KINGSTON

Author of  
"Famous Judges and Famous Trials," etc.



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# DRAMATIC DAYS

## CHAPTER I

WHEN throughout a dismal December night in 1922 queues of people waited for admission to the Old Bailey, history was only repeating itself. Less than a hundred years ago the Old Bailey was regarded as a rival to the theatres, and the sessions were attended by all ranks and classes, from royalty downwards. A pound was willingly paid for a seat in the gallery during the trial of James Greenacre and Sarah Gale, and when Courvoisier was indicted for the wilful murder of Lord William Russell, in 1840, princes sat on the benches as spectators, and the dock itself was crowded with sightseers and sensation-mongers, who unconcernedly kept the prisoner company! During the trial of Madame Fahmy, the police did their best to prevent a repetition of the scenes which would have made the Ilford case more notorious, if that had been possible. They postponed the formation of queues until nine in the morning, and, although the constant "moving-on" of that mysterious army of Londoners who can find time for any business except their own, almost amounted to persecution, there was a crowd battling for admission to court, when London's only free theatre was opened. But the spectacle of a beautiful woman in her agony can draw crowds, just as it did in the days of Nero.

The Old Bailey retains its fascination because of its immutable living interest. Almost daily human nature is stripped bare, and the elemental passions are revealed

in flashes in which love, hatred, jealousy, greed and revenge play their part. Through the dock have passed, and will continue to pass as long as the world lasts, representatives of all ranks, for temptation is no respecter of persons.

I remember one sessions when the convicted persons included the son of a marquis, a West End physician, a dock labourer, a domestic servant and a solicitor who had been educated at Eton and Oxford. All went "down," to use the police expression for conviction, to mingle together for an hour or two, and then to be sorted and dispatched to various prisons. And every conviction meant a tragedy, and the breaking of more than one heart; for even the worst of men has someone to love him in the depths.

Perhaps the most dramatic trial of the century was that of Steinnie Morrison for the murder of Leon Beron on Clapham Common. The tall, powerful-looking Jew with the British name dominated the proceedings from start to finish. A small regiment of warders in attendance paid a silent tribute to the fear he had created, and the electric atmosphere indicated that the prisoner was a distinct personality. There was a tense and painful moment when the verdict of guilty had been pronounced. Every eye was on the prisoner.

"I protest my innocence in the sight of God!" he cried, almost inarticulate with helpless fury.

The warders were very close to him now. Morrison was quivering and his eyes were blazing, and when the judge implored him to make peace with the Almighty the convicted murderer interrupted with an expression of disbelief—inconsistent in view of his former statement—in the existence of the Supreme Deity, delivered with a savagery eloquent of the man's turbulent state of mind.

Fifty-five years earlier another murderer had stood in the dock at the Old Bailey and had hurled his atheistic beliefs at the judge.

"There is no God!" exclaimed Emanuel Barthelemy, convicted of killing a policeman of the name of Collard. When the chaplain tried to reason with him the Frenchman sarcastically remarked, "If there is a God, let him save my body by opening the prison doors. That's all I ask."

I think it was Sir Herbert Tree, who, after dreamily surveying the court during a particularly dull day of a "sensational trial," remarked to his neighbour, a well-known novelist, "I suppose that judge wears a wig to distinguish him from the man in the dock!"

Well, there were many dull days when Seddon was on trial for his life, but the excitement was almost unbearable when the jury were considering their verdict. Most of us felt that the insurance agent had poisoned Miss Barrow, yet everyone expected disagreement or "Not guilty."

The uncertainty was nerve-racking, and when the foreman announced that the verdict was for the Crown there was an audible sigh of relief, followed by an excited buzz of conversation. This quickly died away, and when, in response to the usual question if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed, Seddon answered in a loud voice, "I have, sir!" there was another thrill which was repeated when, in his concluding words, the prisoner swore by "the Great Architect of the Universe" that he was innocent.

Already he had made the Masonic sign which the judge, an eminent Freemason, could not have failed to notice. Indeed, in his final remarks, Mr. Justice Bucknill, who was profoundly affected, reminded the man he was sending to an ignoble death that "you and I belong to one brotherhood, and it is all the more painful to me to have to say what I am saying. Our brotherhood does not encourage crime; on the contrary, it condemns it!"

Protestations of innocence are expected at every

trial, but it is the comparatively unimportant culprit who is most voluble on the subject.

"May God strike me dead if I did it!" cried a cockney, when the jury had disappointed him. There was a pause, and then the judge, in slow, measured tones said, "Prisoner at the bar, Providence not having seen fit to interpose in your case, it is my duty to impose on you the sentence of the law." And he did so, to the extent of three years.

Mr. Justice Hawkins had a peculiar fondness for presiding at the Old Bailey sessions. It has been said of him that early in a case he made up his mind whether the accused was innocent or guilty, and there and then became the partisan seeking a verdict instead of being a judge holding evenly the scales of justice. His summing-up in the Penge trial has been described as a brilliant speech for the prosecution; undoubtedly it influenced the decision of the jury.

On that occasion, two men and two women were in the dock, charged with having starved a woman to death. The case had excited such intense interest that many thousands of persons assembled outside the Old Bailey until midnight in order to cheer the verdict and demonstrate in honour of the judge.

When his lordship was passing sentence of death the scene in court was as weird as it was dramatic. All the prisoners were in a half-fainting condition, and their ghastly pallor was tinged with a horrible yellow from the gloom-infested gaslight.

The convicts were ordered for execution, but the trial was succeeded by a determined newspaper controversy, in which Charles Reade, the novelist, played a leading part. Some hundreds of medical men signed a memorial to the Home Secretary, in which they stated that Harriet Staunton had not died from starvation, and, as a consequence of this agitation, the prisoners were reprieved, and one of them, the younger woman, immediately set free.

I think the most affecting incident in the Lamson trial—another of Mr. Justice Hawkins' cases—was that which immediately succeeded the exit of the jury from court to consider their verdict. His lordship had vacated the Bench, and there was a murmur of surprise when the prisoner remained in the dock. It was the custom for the accused to be taken downstairs to wait in seclusion the summons to hear the verdict. Instead of disappearing, Lamson walked to the end of the dock furthest from the door and, having been given a pen, signed a document which a solicitor handed to him. It all happened in less than a minute, and it was only when the doctor, whose offence was murdering his crippled brother-in-law by dosing him with aconite, had temporarily vanished that it was realised that he had signed his will.

It must have been a fearful moment for Lamson, because the necessity for making his will was in itself an expression of belief that the jury would find him guilty. He had to put himself in the position of a man condemned to death, and it is not surprising that his signature should have been a series of nervous scratches.

Had he postponed signing it until after the verdict, he would never have been able to leave his small property to the wife who loved him so dearly, because by the law of the land he would have ceased to exist as a citizen, and would have lost all his civil rights.

Despite the exposure of his cruel and cowardly crime, Lamson was the recipient of flowers and fruit from certain misguided women, who would have invaded his cell to comfort him had the prison governor allowed them. But there is no understanding human nature, and least of all an Old Bailey crowd. It will cheer an acquittal with the same heartiness as a conviction.

Life is full of ups and downs, and at almost any sessions at the Old Bailey may be seen some startling reverses of fortune. I think the most remarkable was



unobserved by the Press at the time, for the man who stood in the dock was to all appearances a commonplace criminal, and his offence, burglary, lacked all those features which inspire headlines.

It was not a sensational trial, and lasted only an hour, for the accused was clearly convicted by the evidence of the two policemen who had arrested him. For a few weeks the prisoner had been a jobbing gardener, and he had taken advantage of his access to a house in North London to purloin silver plate to the value of a hundred pounds. However, his plans miscarried, and he got six months' hard labour, a lenient sentence in the circumstances, and the papers dealt with the case in a few lines.

Yet the convict deserved more space, for the reason that less than fifteen years previously he had been governor of one of his Majesty's prisons! What his thoughts were on the first occasion he found himself locked in a convict's cell can only be imagined.

It may be said of all the principals in an Old Bailey murder trial that they stand a chance of becoming famous, if not already on the Roll of Fame—even the prisoner may have his effigy at Madame Tussaud's! But, while opportunities come to the many, few are equal to making the most of them.

Edward Besley was an Old Bailey barrister, who gathered together a large clientèle, chiefly because his services were to be had for a few guineas and also because he could bellow and browbeat and bully in the fashion beloved of the professional defender of criminals. He never rose above the ranks, however, owing to the lack of that perception and perspicacity which must be part of the equipment of the successful barrister. When Besley was retained to defend Henry Wainwright, the East End brushmaker who murdered Harriet Lane and buried her in his disused warehouse, he had a chance in a thousand to prove his mettle.

After studying his brief, he realised that his client

must be convicted unless he could persuade the jury that the Crown had not established beyond a doubt the identity of the mutilated corpse found in Wainwright's possession. In the indictment the prisoner was charged with the murder of "Harriet Lane," and Besley decided to argue that a year having elapsed between the woman's disappearance and the discovery of the remains, it was impossible to identify them.

The plan seemed likely to succeed when the father of the murdered girl could give no definite reason why he had identified the human remains, which had been shown to him at the post-mortem, as those of his missing daughter.

Mr. Lane "believed" they were his daughter's, but beyond that could not go, for the features were unrecognisable. Now, Besley ought to have ceased to cross-examine at this point, for over cross-examination has been the downfall of more than one promising novice at the criminal Bar, but he rushed in where a Marshall Hall would have feared to tread.

"You can only say that you believe they are your daughter's remains?" he asked, politely.

"I am sure it was Harriet's body I saw," answered Mr. Lane, quietly.

"But that is only an expression of opinion, you know," persisted counsel, "and not proof. You cannot prove what you say, can you?"

Conscious that he was scoring heavily, counsel leaned towards the witness, his face glowing, and his eyes sparkling. Mr. Lane was about to repeat his expression of belief again when he paused. Besley had been badgering him for half an hour, and had prevented him thinking, but now memory suddenly came to his aid.

"Yes, I can!" he exclaimed. "I've just remembered that when Harriet was a little girl she was scalded on the right leg by a kettle falling over her, and that it

made such a deep scar that the doctor was never able to get rid of it."

Sir Harry Poland, K.C., then at the zenith of his brilliant career, was in charge at this stage of the prosecution, and the weakness of the identification of Harriet's remains had been a source of anxiety to him. Thanks to Besley's over cross-examination that difficulty was swept away, for Poland had the remains exhumed, and there, sure enough, was the scar on the leg in the very place indicated by the bereaved father.

At the Old Bailey, Henry Wainwright was convicted and sentenced to death, and his brother, Thomas, got seven years for assisting to remove the corpse from the Whitechapel Road to the Borough. The most astonishing feature of the Wainwright affair was the fact that the murderer was able to get rid of his victim and satisfy the enquiries of her friends and relations, who, apparently, never thought of seeking the aid of the police. For a year, Harriet Lane's grave was under the floor of a warehouse, and her murderer might have escaped if, in transferring the remains he had not left them in charge of a youth named Stokes, whom he had retained to help him, while he himself went in search of a cab.

Had he sent the youth for the vehicle all might have been well, but the apparently trivial mistake cost Wainwright his wretched life, for Stokes, although not unduly fastidious, could not ignore the evidence of his sense of smell, and he informed the police that the parcels invited investigation. The arrest of Wainwright created an enormous sensation, and even a hardened lawyer like Henry Hawkins could not resist the peculiar fascination of the brushmaker's crime. He attended as a mere spectator the police court proceedings, where, for a short time, the late Sir W. S. Gilbert, the famous playwright, was officially one of the counsel for the defence. Gilbert, however, took no active part in the proceedings, having been asked to be briefed

solely that he might escape jury-service, the dramatist having been called on some trifling cases when he was in the throes of a new comedy. As practising barristers only are exempt, Gilbert had to make a pretence of returning to the Bar, to which he had been called some years previously.

The author of "The Mikado," when on the magisterial Bench, disapproved of humour in court, and yet, I am sure he would have appreciated a little dialogue at the Old Bailey, when a man, whose grey hairs suggested that he had at least attained the half century, was charged with a serious offence.

The proof of his misdeed was overwhelming, and counsel, therefore, had to seek some means of enlisting the sympathy of the jury on behalf of his client. Consequently, his speech contained many pathetic references to the fact that the prisoner was a friendless orphan; indeed, the word "orphan" was used sentimentally by him in almost every sentence until the judge, suspecting that he was being trifled with, became irritable.

"Excuse me, Mr. Blank, he said, impatiently, "but I fail to see what the fact of your client being an orphan has to do with the case. He has obviously arrived at that time of life when the loss of one's parents is natural and only to be expected. Why, I cannot be older than the accused, and I am an orphan, too."

"Quite so, my lord," said counsel, in his suavest manner, "and I trust that should your lordship ever have the misfortune to be brought before a jury of your fellow-countrymen, that fact will be taken into consideration."

But his lordship had the last word, and the "orphan" in the dock received seven years' penal servitude.

In the Temple and other places where lawyers congregate, it is sometimes asked which counsel has secured the greatest number of acquittals in murder trials. I have been told that Sir Edward Marshall

Hall, K.C., has six of these triumphs to his credit, although I can recall only three, the Camden Town murder and the recent Greenwood and Fahmy cases.

To earn a verdict of "Not guilty" in these circumstances, is admittedly something of which a barrister may well be proud, for no man is placed on trial for his life unless there is strong presumptive evidence of his guilt, and from first to last counsel for the defence is fighting against terrific odds.

"Better let ninety-nine guilty men escape than one innocent man be convicted," said a famous judge, and murderers have been known to escape because judges have not been fully satisfied of their guilt.

One of these owed his liberty and his life to Montague Williams, the Marshall Hall of his day.

Williams was briefed to defend at a county assizes a labourer charged with a most brutal murder. When counsel ascertained the strength of the case against his client, he marvelled that the prisoner's friends should have gone to the expense of retaining him when they must have known that conviction was certain. However, he threw himself body and soul into the unequal combat. and by means of an eloquent speech, delivered with theatrical as well as forensic ability, he so hypnotised the jury that to his own amazement, and to the disgust of the judge, they returned a verdict of "Not guilty."

Late that night the acquitted prisoner, who had celebrated his escape by visits to the local public-houses, was seen parading the principal street with his right hand extended, and shouting at the top of his voice, "That's the hand that did it!"

Williams confessed that he never ceased to regret the effect of his speech.

On another occasion his personal success had an unexpected and disastrous sequel for his client. The Old Bailey was not crowded when Catherine Wilson was placed in the dock charged with attempting to murder by means of poison a woman who had been

her friend. Montague Williams was a young man and hardly known to the public, but he took command of the case from the beginning, cross-examined the witnesses with great skill, and ended up by making a speech which brought back some colour to the sallow cheeks of the unlovely creature in the dock.

There were numerous scenes between judge and counsel, but Williams stuck to his guns, and, although the prosecution had given no quarter and had presented a mass of convincing evidence, the defence had every reason to hope for a disagreement when the jury filed out of court.

The young barrister, conscious that whatever the fate of his client his own reputation was assured, was day-dreaming when someone tapped him on the shoulder. Half-turning, he saw a middle-aged man with military shoulders and a pair of penetrating eyes.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, in a whisper, "but if you get her off it'll be the worst day's work you've ever done for anybody."

"What do you mean?" asked Williams, surprised.

"Well, sir, I am a detective, and if she's acquitted my orders are to arrest her on a charge of wilful murder," was the startling reply. "Conviction now will mean seven or ten years; acquittal, trial for murder with the certainty of death. My instructions are not to act on my warrant if she's found guilty on this charge."

An hour later the foreman of the jury announced that Catherine Wilson was not guilty.

"I knew I'd win!" she exclaimed, joyfully, and scuttled out of the dock; but she left the court a prisoner, and the detective's prophecy was fulfilled, for she was eventually convicted of murder and executed. She remains in the criminal calendar to-day as the most remarkable female poisoner Great Britain has produced.

Williams' Old Bailey successes aroused the jealousy of some of his contemporaries, amongst them a typical

criminal barrister whose clients, when indicted for wilful murder, invariably found their way to the condemned cell. One day he boasted in the hearing of Williams that he had been "forty years at the Bar, and I have never had a complaint about the way I have looked after my clients' interests."

"That's because dead men tell no tales," retorted Williams slyly.

Williams, however, did not always emerge victorious from those verbal duels which are common where keen-witted men and rivals congregate. His "thunder and lightning" style of oratory exposed him to innumerable shafts of wit, especially to those discharged with malicious enjoyment by Serjeant Ballantine.

"Splendid, my deah Monty," drawled Ballantine, at the conclusion of one of Williams' Old Bailey speeches, and when the flushed and perspiring barrister was panting for breath, "if the jury will only mistake perspiration for inspiration you should score a galloping acquittal."

The humour of the Old Bailey is, of course, of the grim variety, and it will break out even in the most serious moments of a life and death struggle. Thus when a voluble landlady declared in the witness-box that she had been prepared for trouble from the moment she had let a room to the accused, who was on trial for his life, Mr. Justice Darling, ending an unusually, for him, long period of silence, remarked that she must be a pessimist.

"Begging your pardon, my lord," she exclaimed, bridling, "but I have always been a member of the Church of England!"

In another murder trial a witness was asked what he had said to a certain person at whose house he had called. The question had scarcely been put by counsel for the prosecution when the K.C. who was defending jumped to his feet almost white with well-simulated

passion to protest against it. His lordship ordered all the witnesses out of court, while for an hour counsel and judge discussed the knotty legal problem, and learned authorities from the seventeenth century onwards were cited, and points of view contrasted with much acerbity.

Eventually the judge decided that the question could be put and that it must be answered. Accordingly the witness was brought back into court, placed in the box, and counsel rose, and with extra solemnity and the self-importance befitting the victor of a fierce and acrimonious debate asked what he had said to the gentleman on whom he had called.

"He was out, sir," was the answer.

The roar of laughter which followed made him wonder if he had suddenly become a wit or if the crowded court had lost its senses.



## CHAPTER II

RUSKIN's half humorous remark that no judge should be appointed until he had practical experience of what imprisonment is like, contained more than the proverbial grain of wisdom, although I cannot imagine Sir John Simon or Sir Edward Marshall Hall sacrificing their enormous earnings and spending a month in Pentonville in order to qualify for a seat on the Bench. On the same plan we should have to hang our "hanging judges," though at present the Bench does not boast one.

It was because they betrayed an indecent ardour to obtain convictions that certain judges were so branded. The first of this unenviable tribe was Mr. Justice Page, who, when very old and feeble, was accosted near the Old Bailey by a friend.

"How are you, Sir John?" he said, solicitously, noting the faltering footsteps of his lordship.

"Oh, I just keep hanging on, hanging on!" was the response, given with a chuckle and a leer, and the "hanging judge" continued his walk to his home in Bloomsbury.

Another judge who, when the jury pronounced for manslaughter and not murder, turned to the wretch in the dock, and, having surveyed him with calculated disgust, remarked:

"Prisoner, you are the luckiest man I've ever met;—take penal servitude for life!"

In the days when all convicted prisoners were remanded to the last day of the sessions and then sentenced in batches, there was a very polite judge

who had to sentence eleven men to death. In the course of his pronouncement he named only ten of the culprits, and it was not until the dock had been emptied that an official called his attention to the omission.

"Bring back John Smith," said his lordship promptly, and the convict was recalled to the dock.

"John Smith," said the judge, in his most deferential and apologetic manner, "I have been informed that I overlooked you just now when delivering sentence. Pray excuse my mistake. I am very sorry for it."

And then he formally sentenced John Smith to be hanged by the neck until he was dead!

It is curious that in the twentieth century there should be apparently intelligent beings who imagine that they can influence the course of justice by writing letters to the judges, counsel and even to the prisoners. Hundreds wrote or telegraphed offers of marriage to Kitty Byron, and hundreds more deluged Mr. Justice Darling with advice, while many even offered to take her place on the scaffold.

The most practical attempt to succour a prisoner in distress was the work of a clever doctor of rare ability, whose family had been a noted one for nearly two hundred years. He was present in an interested capacity at the trial of Charles Shurety, for the murder of a child, and the Old Bailey was packed that morning in January, 1880, when the accused pleaded not guilty.

There was, however, a clear case against him and he was convicted and sentenced to death. After his trial he was removed to a cell in Newgate adjoining, and no one expected a reprieve. For nearly three weeks the prisoner occupied the condemned cell, and then on the day appointed the executioner entered to prepare him for death.

This was at a quarter to eight, and five minutes later word was sent to the governor that everything was ready and that the dismal procession to the scaffold was about to be formed. The governor intimated that

he would soon be on the scene, and he was about to leave his office when a warder handed him an official-looking letter.

Glancing at the clock, the governor noticed that it wanted five minutes to the hour timed for the execution of Charles Shurety, then, to his astonishment, he saw that the letter, presumably from the Home Secretary, ordered the postponement of the sentence of the law.

At first he was inclined to obey without question, but another reading of the document raised doubts in his mind as to its genuineness. On the face of it there was something odd in the Home Secretary failing to make up his mind until the last minute, and the surreptitious manner in which the vital message had been delivered further increased his doubts.

On the other hand he had to remind himself that the right honourable gentleman might just have discovered facts in favour of the convict, and in his anxiety to save his life might have scribbled the order for the reprieve on the nearest sheet of notepaper.

What ought he to do ? The governor had only a couple of minutes now in which to decide, and he never forgot those minutes during the rest of his life. If the letter was genuine and he allowed his prisoner to be executed he might be charged with murder himself ; if it was bogus and he postponed the execution he would lose his position, probably, and Shurety would have to be reprieved.

" We are waiting, sir," said the chief warder, entering his office.

In that moment the governor made the great decision.

" Very well," he said, quietly, and did not speak again until the condemned prisoner was lying in his coffin.

There had been no time, of course, to communicate with the Cabinet Minister, and the governor's uncertainty and anxiety were not relieved until after

the inquest. Then, however, he had the satisfaction of learning that the letter was an impudent forgery.

It was sent to Scotland Yard and a couple of clever detectives were ordered to trace the writer of it. They speedily located some valuable clues, and as a result the literary doctor was arrested, and three months subsequent to the trial of Charles Shurety he was indicted at the Old Bailey, convicted, and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment and a fine of fifty pounds.

The trial of Lipski, the Polish Jew, for a particularly vile murder, is now forgotten, but some thirty years ago it created a great sensation. The late W. T. Stead came forth as the champion of the convict, and in the paper he was then editing, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, conducted a raging, tearing propaganda in favour of a reprieve.

The Home Secretary was deluged with letters, men and women pestered him at his private residence, and he was booed in public when recognised. At last the Cabinet Minister was preparing to sign a reprieve when a clerk entered his room with a document.

It was a full confession of guilt by Lipski !

There is an ancient sinner touring the cells and cheaper lodging-houses of London whose proud boast is that he made the reputations and fortunes of several leading counsel, including Rufus Isaacs (now Lord Reading and Viceroy of India), Sir Edward Marshall Hall and Sir Edward Carson (now a peer and a Lord of Appeal).

These gentlemen have probably never heard of the crook's existence, but he declares that he gave them their first chance to prove their ability. The elderly rogue's sense of pride is so perverted that he will relate with gusto old stories of misdeeds and his subsequent appearances at the Old Bailey with counsel, then unknown, pleading for him. He was the man, he avers, on whom they practised before they rose to fame.

"They ought to keep me, they ought," he complained to the writer, "but all my letters remain unanswered. A blinkin' shime, I calls it." But the pride of denizens of the dock is ever paradoxical.

When Percy Lefroy, the murderer of Mr. Gold, on the Brighton Railway, was ushered into the dock at Maidstone, he displayed with obvious pride a new silk hat which he had had specially procured for him by a friend. The prisoner had applied for permission to wear evening dress throughout the trial, evidently believing that no jury would dare convict of murder a person so attired.

When this was denied him he sought for consolation in a new hat, and during the proceedings he carefully tended it, eyeing the jury as he did so in order to draw attention to this emblem of respectability.

"Don't lay your common hands on me, fellow!" exclaimed a middle-aged virago of voracious aspect to the warder who touched her arm to remind her that as the jury had retired, she must vacate the dock. "You forget that my father was a general."

"You mean your mother was," retorted the gaoler, who was well aware that the adventuress belonged to an obscure family in Canning Town.

"I shall report you to the judge!" she threatened majestically. "As soon as the verdict of the jury has set me free, I will make my complaint."

But the complaint had to be postponed for seven years!

A remarkable occupant of the dock was a woman who was tried for perjury at the Old Bailey a few years ago. She had previously brought an action for breach of promise against a retired general, who had first met her in his capacity as visiting justice at a prison.

After the failure of her action she was arrested, and the first Old Bailey jury having disagreed, she was put on trial a second time.

"I am a lady," she said proudly, glaring at the

judge, "and I ought not to be here. My right place is on the Bench with your lordship."

"For the present you had better remain where you are," said the judge politely. "After all, it is the most comfortable in court, because it is not overcrowded."

For some hours the woman kept her gaze fixed on the jury, simpering and sighing and "making eyes" at the foreman. Her expression hardened when his verdict was guilty, and she denounced the judge for cruelty when he sentenced her to four years.

Queen Victoria took more than a passing interest in the trial at the Old Bailey of Benjamin Courvoisier for the murder of Lord William Russell. The rank and fashion of London packed the court, and not the least attraction was the presence of "Orator" Phillips, as counsel for the prisoner.

Phillips was a very eloquent speaker, but he had a weakness for indulging in sudden descents from the sublime to the ridiculous. For example, in a breach of promise suit he began his address to the jury somewhat in this manner :

"Gentlemen, this serpent in human shape stole the virgin heart of my innocent client when she was leaving church, and then went and dined at the officers' mess."

In the Courvoisier trial, however, Phillips was at his best. The suspicion against his client was strong, but the evidence for the Crown was weak and unsatisfactory, and Phillips expected that his final speech would gain the verdict. It was then that Courvoisier advanced to the front of the dock and asked for a private interview with two of his counsel. When the barristers came up to him the prisoner whispered to Phillips a confession of guilt.

"You don't wish us to continue the defence, I presume?" asked the Irishman, struggling with amazement at the sudden revelation.

"Yes, I do," answered the valet of the murdered nobleman, "I expect you to do your best for me."

This was a poser for Charles Phillips. He had prepared a brilliant oration, and now he had not the heart to deliver it; but he remembered that it was his duty to present the best case he could for his client. So he made the speech which has since been so often sharply criticised. It has been said that Phillips swore on his honour that he knew Courvoisier to be innocent, but this was not so. He confined himself merely to dealing with the weak points in the case for the prosecution.

The evidence of the hotel-keeper in whose charge Courvoisier had left some of the stolen goods from Lord William Russell's house really determined the issue, and, although Phillips' speech brought tears to the eyes of the judge and jury alike, there was never any chance of escape for the young Swiss.

Members of the royal family and peers of all ranks watched the contest in that most dramatic of arenas, the Old Bailey, and their thirst for the sensational was only whetted and not satiated by the trial, although there had been sensations enough to satisfy any ordinary person. They clamoured for permission to interview the convict and to be amongst those favoured with seats to witness the public execution.

It must have been about this time that a future tenant of the Old Bailey dock was earning a humble living in a fried fish shop in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. Rachel Leverson had never been favoured with good looks, but she had a magnificent physique, boundless courage, and a cynical contempt for the intelligence of other people.

In her obese and oily middle-age she decided to become a beauty specialist! She had little capital, but plenty of nerve, and when she succeeded in getting rooms in Bond Street, she believed her fortune was made. To a certain extent she was right. Soon ladies in society flocked to the mysterious, and, to them, fascinating parlour of London's latest beauty specialist. They did

not hesitate to tell their family secrets to the fat and ugly Jewess with the glinting eyes, and even when she turned their confidences into money by blackmailing them, the supply of ready-made victims did not cease.

Had she tempered blackmail and beauty-making with discretion, Madame Rachel, as she called herself, might have amassed a huge fortune ; but success made her greedy, and greed bred rashness. Thus, when an elderly Anglo-Indian lady as ugly as herself called to ask what Madame would charge to make her beautiful for ever, Rachel demanded a hundred guineas on account, and in the course of a few weeks extracted over three thousand guineas from the deluded woman, who, instead of gaining a lovely complexion, found herself growing uglier, if that was possible.

In her disappointment she turned against Rachel the blackmailer, defied her threats to expose her to ridicule, and had her arrested. At the first trial at the Old Bailey, the audience, mostly people of rank, were kept in paroxysms of laughter as the folly of the prisoner's clients was revealed. And Madame joined in the hilarity and even made a few jokes herself !

"Only a fool would have consulted a beauty specialist who obviously could not do anything for herself," said counsel for the prosecution.

"Then your wife must be a fool," retorted the prisoner significantly.

There was a titter, and it was useless for counsel to deny that his wife had ever sought Madame Rachel's aid. As a matter of fact, it was a lie, but the unscrupulous woman in the dock was ready to employ any means to hurt her enemies. To her surprise the jury failed to agree.

"Sensible men," she muttered to a wardress by her side, "let them send their wives to Bond Street, and I'll beautify them and prove I'm no fraud."

It was thought that the prosecution would be abandoned ; but Madame Rachel was brought up a



second time, and on behalf of the prosecution Serjeant Ballantine delivered a brilliant speech which was a mixture of humour and venom. His droll rendering of some items from the prisoner's catalogue sent the court into hysterics.

Thus :

"The Royal Arabian Toilet of Beauty, as arranged by Madame Rachel for the Sultana of Turkey, the facsimile of which is used by the Royal European Brides," cost one hundred guineas to a thousand guineas. "Jordan Water (brought by swift dromedaries from the River Jordan)," twenty guineas. "Sultana's Beauty Wash," "Circassian Cream," and "Magnetic Rock." "Dew of Sahara for Removing Wrinkles" could be had for a few guineas.

The impostor's exposure was complete; yet, after she had been sentenced to five years' penal servitude, hundreds of letters were addressed to her by women who fondly believed that the creature had some mysterious power and that she could make the ugly beautiful. A second conviction, however, terminated her career, for she died in gaol.

What does it feel like to be on trial for one's life? That is a question often asked, especially during a sensational case at the Old Bailey, and I have put to four men who have faced the ordeal. Two of them had been acquitted, a third had been discharged after two failures by juries to agree to a verdict, and the fourth had been found guilty, sentenced to death, reprieved, and liberated when he had served eighteen years in various prisons.

The last man was the least interested of them all, and the only subject he wished to discuss was motoring. He had been astonished to see horseless vehicles moving swiftly about the streets of London, and as he was sentenced in the year 1890, when they were unknown, he had only heard of the new form of locomotion.

The best time to interview anyone who has achieved the rare feat of acquittal on the capital charge is six months or so after his triumph. By then he will have dropped the pose of hero and recovered from the strain of the fearful anxiety. One of the men I have referred to had a wonderful ovation from Press and public when the jury uttered the words which must have sounded like music in his ears ; yet I have not the slightest doubt he was guilty. Indeed, when I talked over his trial with him nearly a year later he scarcely took the trouble to conceal his guilt.

He was frank because he knew he could not be put on trial again for the crime. He chatted freely, and between outbursts of laughter, related his efforts to persuade himself on the last day of the trial that he would win.

"My chief impression," he said, smiling, "was the discomfort endured by the crowd to see me in the dock, where I had plenty of room. All the same, I'd rather have been one of the audience. One of these days I shall visit the Old Bailey during a murder trial so as to experience the sensations of an onlooker."

He carried out his intention, but he was unable to remain at the Old Bailey for more than a couple of hours. The sight of the dock which had been the scene of his agony for six days proved too much for him and too reminiscent of painful memories.

When Calcraft, the executioner, was asked if he had ever hanged an innocent man he replied that he could not tell, but he had had "no complaints." He was emphatic, however, in the opinion that many guilty men had escaped him. On one occasion he was found in maudlin tears, complaining that, owing to the tender-heartedness of the Home Secretary in granting reprieves, he would soon be a ruined man. Calcraft occasionally wore a flower in his buttonhole when engaged in his ghastly and grisly duties, and when objections were raised, he said with dignity :

"It is to cheer my client up. I am not an undertaker, and decline to dress like one."

A few years ago a prisoner glibly explained to judge and jury that he had become a forger in order to describe, from personal experience, an Old Bailey trial. But the Old Bailey dock does not admit of experiments.

The most remarkable trait in the character of most criminals is stupidity, a stupidity which in the case of men of position and education almost persuades one to believe that they are mad. What could be more brainless than the act of Hugh Watt, a member of Parliament, who walked up to two strangers in Whitehall and offered them a hundred pounds each to come and murder his wife?

Yet this happened in the twentieth century, and the inevitable sequel was a trial for conspiracy to murder at the Old Bailey, where Watt was sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

There was no method in the madness of Hugh Watt, but there was a considerable amount of stupid cunning in the crime of the Rev. William Bailey, LL.D., who figured many years ago at the Old Bailey in a case which is still unique.

William Bailey was a fashionable preacher, with a chapel in the West End of London. His income was quite disproportionate to his expenses, and he was heavily in debt when he heard of the death of a person named Robert Smith, who had the reputation of being very ignorant and very miserly. This seemed to the preacher a chance to obtain some much-needed money, so he forged a promissory note and an I O U, both of which professed to prove that during Smith's lifetime Bailey had placed in his keeping the sum of £2,875 for investment. The latter sum, he averred, had been sent to him by his sister; he therefore claimed the return of the amount from the executors of the deceased Robert Smith.

It will be sufficient to say that when the executors refused to pay, the preacher brought an action against them, lost it, and subsequently was arrested and tried at the Old Bailey, where he never had the smallest chance of hearing a verdict of "Not guilty."

Of course, the trial attracted a great deal of attention, owing to the eminence of the prisoner. He did not seem to be affected by his position, and he showed by his brazen defence that he had many of the attributes of the professional criminal. It was proved that he had offered £20 to a hawker to swear that he had seen him hand the money to Smith. The preacher got a life-sentence, and his chapel was deserted. Until its demolition it was used as a mission-house for the benefit of the very poor.

They decorate the reading-room of the British Museum with the names of famous literary men, and if ever it is found necessary to add to the somewhat attenuated embellishments of the Central Criminal Court in the same manner and style, there are names of certain criminals which cannot be omitted. Charles Peace is one of these.

Peace met his fate at the Leeds Assizes in the form of a death sentence from Mr. Justice Lopes, but he made history at the Old Bailey when he appeared before Mr. Justice Hawkins and was charged with burglary and the attempted murder of P.C. Robinson. Peace had a sense of humour and he was human enough to be fond of playing the violin. Once in the days—and nights—of his glory he presented an acquaintance with a choice cigar.

"This is a fine weed!" exclaimed his friend, after a few appreciative puffs. "Where did you get it?"

"I stole it," answered the burglar, dryly, fully appreciating his humorous honesty.

"You are a funny chap!" was the giggling response.

When Disraeli and Lord Salisbury returned from Berlin with their famous treaty, they found that they

had a serious rival to newspaper space and public gossip in the person of the Blackheath burglar. Everybody was talking about Charles Peace, and the story goes that when the two statesmen, with several other members of the Cabinet, addressed a meeting with a huge banner suspended above their heads bearing the legend, "Peace with Honour," an old lady gravely inquired which of the two was Peace, and which was Honour! In Whig circles, the version of the story was that the inquisitive dame identified Disraeli as Peace, but was not certain as to the identity of Honour!

Mr. Justice Hawkins was a great humorist when at the Bar, but he seldom attempted humour on the Bench, probably finding contentment in the fact that he always had the last word. He gave Peace a life-sentence, although aware that the queer-looking occupant of the dock was going to be transferred to Leeds to stand his trial for the murder of Dyson, the engineer. But probably Hawkins wished to make certain that the burglar would not trouble the world for a generation to come.

His lordship, however, in common with most jesters, did not care to be outwitted. It was said that he never forgave Serjeant Ballantine a certain remark which he passed when they were both practising barristers.

The incident took place in the robing-room at the Old Bailey, where the learned gentlemen were engaged in a sensational case. Now, Ballantine, as was well known, was generally impecunious, whereas Hawkins was reputed to be the richest man at the Bar. He earned at least twice the annual sum that came the way of the serjeant, who was a married man with a son, and who resented the placid prosperity of Hawkins, then a wealthy bachelor.

"Look here, Hawkins," he said, during a discussion, "why do you take so much care of your money? It can't be of much use to you in this world, and you

can't take it with you to the next. If you could it would only melt."

Hawkins' money eventually reached the trustees of the famous Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster, where a special chapel commemorates the charity of the judge who presided over so many sensational Old Bailey trials and who was reputed to enjoy the task of pronouncing the death sentence. Yet he could jest lightly with a colleague who was defending a man against a charge of wilful murder.

Opening the defence in a murder trial at the Old Bailey, or anywhere else, is always a nerve-racking ordeal, and on one occasion when Best, the counsel whose unenviable duty it was to try and make what defence he could, rose to his feet, a large envelope, heavily sealed, was handed to him. He broke the seal and drew forth a black hatband and a pair of black kid gloves, and there was internal evidence to prove that they had come from Hawkins, who had thus thoroughly provided counsel with the necessary mourning to wear when his client was hanged.

In a work of fiction, Best would be depicted making the speech of his life and securing an acquittal, but cold truth compels me to record that Hawkins' prevision was borne out by the result. The prisoner went the way of all flesh with the active assistance of the official hangman.

"What is your name?" asked counsel, on the second day of the trial of Muller, for the murder of Mr. Briggs. Everybody in the crowded court listened in silence for the answer.

"Death," said the witness, and many present shivered involuntarily.

But it was no allegory, for Death was the name of the jeweller who had bought from the prisoner the chain belonging to the murdered man. The incident, however, was prophetic, and Death did more than any other witness to help to convict the young German.

There was a more humorous introduction of names in the Tichborne trial. Henry Hawkins, Q.C., was prosecuting, and Cockburn, as Lord Chief Justice, presided.

"What was the woman's name?" Hawkins asked a witness.

"Hawkins, sir," he answered. There was a titter.

"I mean, what was her name before she was married?" said counsel, a trifle impatiently.

"Cockburn, sir," said the witness, and the titter turned into laughter. Even Hawkins—who was sensitive about his name—smiled!

### CHAPTER III

THE late Lord Halsbury was the hero of many an Old Bailey battle in the days when he was known as Hardinge Giffard and a leader of the criminal Bar. But prisoners seldom enjoyed his assistance, for the Government, realising that he was "worth his weight in gold in guineas"—to quote Mrs. Gamp—snapped him up at any price, and he generally prosecuted.

The defences were left to Montague Williams, Douglas Straight, Serjeant Ballantine, and others, and there was not one of them who did not pray for Giffard's promotion to the Bench, if only to get him out of the way.

One of his last appearances in that notable arena was, perhaps, the most sensational of all. Prosecuting the brothers Bidwell and two other young men in connection with the historic frauds on the Bank of England, Giffard delivered his final speech with two armed detectives behind him, while he was conscious that a goodly proportion of his audience consisted of other men from Scotland Yard.

The four prisoners were guarded by policemen armed to the teeth, and outside the building there was a small army of plain-clothes men. It is not surprising, therefore, that there should have been an electric element in the air, and that everybody concerned should have felt the strain.

For two days the prosecution and the defence discussed the criminal activities of the four young Americans, and then, on the third day, the judge was astonished to hear that a wealthy relative of the Bidwells had arrived in London with a huge sum in



gold, with the avowed object of bribing the warders to allow the prisoners to escape. Stories were told of immense sums offered to the warders, and there was something like a panic at the Old Pailey. When Hardinge Giffard was consulted he pooh-poohed the conspiracy, and he could see no reason why so much fuss should be made. He was positive that the prisoners could not succeed in escaping, but he may have thought differently when a shrewd Scotland Yard detective shadowed one of the suspected warders to the temporary residence of the wealthy American and discovered that the sum of one hundred pounds had changed hands.

Later on, he proved that three warders who guarded the prisoners at night had been induced to accept "something on account." This was very serious, and the authorities lost not a moment in checkmating the efforts of the American. The three warders were suspended, and one of them was arrested, and, later on, punished for a breach of the regulations, and special measures were taken to prevent any attempt to release the prisoners by force.

All the counsel for the Crown were guarded by detectives, and thus it was that Giffard spoke in a court which may be described as in a state of siege. He had no difficulty in securing a verdict of guilty against the quartette, and the last sensation of a sensational trial was the passing of a life sentence on each of the accused. Their gasp of terror when they heard their fate created more than a passing sympathy for them, and several prominent Englishmen tried to secure a reduction, but they failed.

"They are too clever to let loose," said a Cabinet Minister, who had a special veneration for property. "An attack on the Bank of England is, in my opinion, worse than murder."

Giffard's speciality was cross-examination, an art in which he excelled and at which he was unrivalled.

He knew how to knock a cocksure witness off his perch with the minimum of effort.

"Do you drink?" he enquired blandly, of an over-dressed, horsey-looking individual, who was the chief prop of the defence at an Old Bailey trial.

"That's my business!" was the retort.

"Any other?" asked Giffard, with well-affected politeness.

This was matched by Sir Edward Carson, who, when a gorgeously-arrayed person confronted him from the witness-box, and in reply to the question if he was a commercial traveller, said with proud emphasis, "I ham," congratulated him with the sarcastic remark, "Then, sir, you are the best dressed ham I have ever seen."

But men of the stamp of Giffard and Carson merely use the Old Bailey as a stepping-stone to higher things. They are far removed from the average Old Bailey practitioner, with whom they have nothing in common. One of these was Edwin James, Q.C., a remarkable man in many respects, the mystery of whose success was as puzzling as the mystery of his final failure.

His contemporaries at the Bar affected to despise him. Once it was rumoured that a couple of judges, hearing that he was about to be promoted to the Bench, threatened to resign, but they need not have worried. James was bent on ruining himself, and ultimately he did so, although for years his gains amounted to five figures, and he had the offer of more work than he could accept.

James was eventually suspended for misconduct and after he had tried to mend his fortunes in America, he reappeared at the Old Bailey in the guise of a clerk to a solicitor. The once famous Q.C. who in his heyday had hypnotised judge, jury and audience, and who had gained fame in that very court, was glad to sit humbly in the back row with his master's papers and wait on junior counsel with the bashful timidity of the most juvenile of office-boys.

It was a fearful descent for the once great man, but it was only to be expected, for Edwin James as Queen's Counsel had betrayed more than one client to the opposition in return for "loans" of large sums of money, which he never had any intention of returning. There were other offences, and it was a heavy case he had to face when requested to explain. But to this day there has been no adequate explanation of the causes which compelled a man earning a very large income and one who, moreover, lived modestly and not extravagantly, into selling himself to ruin and degradation.

Did the eminent counsel fritter away his gains in the gambling hells of Mayfair? Did the Q.C., who had sown more than an average crop of wild oats, have to pay blackmail in the days of his success for the sins of his youth? No one knows, and the man who saved many a criminal at the Old Bailey found his eloquence unavailing when it came to trying to save himself.

It is not surprising that those who are constantly brought into contact with criminals should become callous and even brutal. The worst side of human nature can hardly be expected to have a refining influence. It must be a hard task to keep one's faith, and yet there have been men who have been all the better for their experiences of the follies of others. It was a man of this type who said to a famous wit that he saw very little difference between those in gaol and those out of it.

"In fact," he continued, with something like enthusiasm, "I intend to staff my house with ex-convicts."

"If you do," retorted the wit, "you'll be the only spoon in the house at the end of the week."

We can, however, sympathise with him. He was superior to the Old Bailey chaplain, who, meeting Montague Williams in a corridor after the famous counsel had secured a verdict of guilty against a murderer, remarked with an oily grin of congratulation :

"Well, Williams, I see you've bagged your bird!" And with this pleasant commentary on the wretched criminal, his reverence went on to lunch.

When an Old Bailey barrister is certain of winning he is usually very polite and suave, and purrs as he cross-examines; but he is a different being when he foresees a disagreement among the jury or an adverse verdict. It is often the same with the judges. Old habitués of the Central Criminal Court professed to be able to tell by Hawkins' demeanour what the result of any given trial would be.

"The old man's very polite this morning," said one barrister to another, early in the Neil Cream murder trial.

"Yes, he means to hang him," remarked his friend, and he was right. The judge, however, sure of his prey, was all wreathed in smiles, for Hawkins believed that his mission on earth was to see that the guilty did not escape.

Mr. Justice Darling makes a very good Old Bailey judge, and many prefer him there to seeing him in the King's Bench. His humour, too, is appreciated at the Old Bailey, where it serves the purpose of relieving dreary and oppressive periods. I will give a specimen which occurs to me at the moment.

There was a witness who kept on referring to a friend of his as a "gent," a word which caused Mr. Justice Darling to shudder, and eventually roused him to interrupt.

"A gent?" he said, interrogatively, "I suppose a gent means something short of a gentleman?"

The late Sir William Grantham was another famous Old Bailey judge, and there was always plenty of interest when he was on the Bench. One never knew when he would deliver a political opinion or a scathing comment on some topic of the day—both equally and delightfully irrelevant to the subject under discussion and investigation. But he was a fine type of old English gentleman,

and one prisoner at least bore him no ill-will for a swinging sentence of penal servitude.

"His lordship is a real toff," he said, with enthusiasm, as the warders were removing him to the cells beneath the dock. "He rides his horse like a gentleman, and doesn't crawl to court in a motor car. I have seen him at the races, too."

The Old Bailey has more than once been the scene of a well stage-managed trial, that is, on the part of the defence. Some of these attempts to arouse the sympathies of the jury have been, perhaps, justified because human and natural, but others have been based purely on trickery. The late Mr. Justice Grantham told a story of an able barrister who was briefed to defend a woman accused of having murdered her husband by means of a poisoned cake made by her own fair hands. As the greater portion of the cake was captured by the police and produced in court as an exhibit the question of her guilt or innocence ought to have been settled without any difficulty. But for some reason the facts in the possession of the prosecution were by no means conclusive when the trial began at the Old Bailey, and counsel for the defence determined on a bold line of action. "My lord," he said, in a contemptuous tone, "it is ridiculous to talk of this cake as being poisoned. Why, I will eat some of it myself here and now." He was as good as his word, and, having swallowed a sample of the exhibit, he was about to resume his address and let judge, jury and audience wait for the test to work its way to a finish, when a messenger arrived with a letter containing the news that his mother was seriously ill.

"May I have your lordship's permission to retire into another room in order to write a reply?" he said, gravely.

It was, of course, granted, and five minutes later he was in court again and continuing his speech for his client. As he suffered no ill-effects from his daring

experiment it is not surprising that the jury should have acquitted the prisoner.

But that "bold, brave barrister" was not so confident of his client's innocence as he induced the court to believe; indeed, he must have strongly suspected that the cake was saturated with poison, for he arranged for the letter to be delivered into his hands immediately he had swallowed the portion of cake so that he might have an excuse to leave the court and take an emetic!

Much more human and much less artificial was the device which helped to persuade another Old Bailey jury to acquit a woman brought to trial for active participation in a very daring jewel robbery. Martha Torpey was an extremely pretty and engaging young person with a dainty figure, and when she entered the dock carrying her few months' old baby, which had inherited some of her loveliness, a distinct atmosphere was created which, needless to say, was not to her disadvantage. And yet the charge against her was a very grave one and the facts as outlined by counsel for the prosecution were not denied. A short time previously she and her husband had rented by means of fraudulent testimonials a well-furnished house near Berkeley Square, and, fortified by the possession of an unmistakably respectable address, the husband had called at a Bond Street jeweller's and had asked him to send an assistant to his residence in order that "Mr. Tyrell," the name by which the Torpeys passed, and his wife and sister might select at their leisure what they required.

The representative of the jeweller had not the remotest suspicion of danger when he knocked on the door of the West End mansion, and when it was opened by Torpey himself that person smilingly explained that he happened to be going out at the very moment the man from Bond Street arrived. A little later four thousand pounds worth of jewellery was displayed on the drawing room table and Torpey and his wife were

examining it. The former noticed that the assistant seemed anxious to keep them in front of him, so that he could see every movement they made, and, to circumvent this, Torpey requested the lady to ask her sister to step downstairs and choose what she wanted. Mrs. Torpey walked towards the door and once she was behind the assistant she darted back, and, throwing her arms around his neck, pressed a handkerchief saturated with chloroform over his face and held it there until he was unconscious.

When the unfortunate man regained consciousness every scrap of jewellery had disappeared along with "Mr. Tyrell" and his wife, and, as the heavy drawing room door was locked from the outside he had to smash a pane of glass and call for assistance until a policeman was attracted to the spot. The male conspirator vanished, but his wife was arrested, and, as she had actually drugged the jeweller's assistant her counsel did not expect to get her off, though he intended to plead that she had acted under the coercion of her husband. However, he stage-managed the defence adroitly, and when the lovely prisoner with the beautiful baby stood in the dock she presented such a picture of charming and Madonna-like innocence that it was almost impossible to credit her with having of her own free-will committed a dangerous assault. Montague Williams delivered a long and eloquent speech on her behalf, but it was the tableau in the dock which earned that favourable verdict. It is satisfactory to know, however, that Torpey was subsequently arrested and consigned to penal servitude.

Another female jewel thief, Emily Lawrence, might have helped her own cause better if she had not shown so much self-possession and haughtiness when she appeared at the Old Bailey in the role of defendant. Emily was tall and stately-looking with aristocratic features, and it was probably the latter which enabled her story of aristocratic birth to gain credence. Yet

she was only the daughter of a domestic servant, and her father had been a labourer. These may have been handicaps, but they did not prevent her imposing on experienced tradesmen in the West End, who, from time to time, allowed themselves to come under the sway of her interesting personality and suffer financial loss accordingly.

She was wanted for five daring robberies from jewellers when she was tried at the Old Bailey, and, as her defence was mainly a contemptuous denial of her guilt, she could not have been surprised when the judge sentenced her to seven years' penal servitude. "You will regret this persecution of a lady!" she cried, viciously, shaking her clenched fist at his lordship. Then she sailed out of the dock in the manner of the *grande dame* leaving a drawing room, and, escorted by warders and wardresses, she disappeared from view.

There was a curious sequel to Emily Lawrence's conviction. How the rumour got into circulation that she succeeded in conveying into prison a considerable portion of the jewellery she had stolen it is impossible to say, but the fact remains that there was hardly a female thief in London who did not come to believe that the redoubtable Emily had tricked the searchers and had concealed somewhere in the great gaol to which she had been consigned diamonds worth nearly five thousand pounds. When the convict was released on ticket-of-leave rumour improved upon the original legend, for it was then stated definitely that Emily had been unable to recover her treasure because she had been transferred to another prison two years before she was let loose again on nervous Bond Street jewellers. The first person to test the truth of the story was a middle-aged shoplifter who purposely stole a blouse in full view of the assistants so that she might be convicted and sent to the prison where Emily Lawrence's treasure was hidden. But she was only one of several criminals in a hurry to enrich themselves, and,



although none of them ever reported success, there are old crooks who will tell you that the woman who found the jewels kept her discovery to herself because she dare not run the risk of having the stolen property traced to her.

There was somewhere in the background of Emily Lawrence's life a husband who had deserted her because she would not keep him, and, as this was well known to the police, Emily could not complain of coercion, nor could it have been worth her while hiring a baby to keep her company in the dock. During the sessions at the Old Bailey there used to be a woman in the vicinity who specialised in lending babies to those of her own sex who wished to make this mute but effective appeal to the jury. She always had at least a couple of well-fed, plump and pretty babies in stock, and her fees ranged from a shilling to a sovereign. She charged the latter to one murderess who was accused of having killed her own baby, but the money was wasted because the good-natured warder, who was a sort of second father to the babies as he saw them so often, intervened and insisted on the child parting company with its temporary mother at the entrance to the dock.

The owner of the baby worked in partnership with her sister, whose duty it was to take up a position near the dock so that in the event of a conviction the child might be handed over the rail to her. It was altogether an extraordinary traffic, but it still continues near certain police courts, and hundreds of women have been discharged with a caution instead of being sent to prison because magistrates have shrunk from inflicting on infants the stigma of gaol. These "mothers" always make great capital out of their statement that as they have no one to look after their children they must take them with them wherever they go, even into prison itself.

Some of these artful dodges have gone wrong and it has happened that a hired baby has unexpectedly

resulted in an enterprising person obtaining a reputation in her neighbourhood which she has lived down with difficulty. One woman who was acquitted after a trial before the Recorder of London was so fascinated by the baby she had hired for half a crown that she was seized with an uncontrollable desire to retain it. She, therefore, side-stepped the friends who were waiting to congratulate her on her triumph, and, avoiding the real mother of the child, she vanished with the baby in her arms. This put the mother in a very difficult position. She did not want to apply to the police because that would mean having to confess her participation in the conspiracy, and she was crazy to have her baby back. Eventually she had to go before a magistrate and obtain the services of a burly sergeant to proceed to the house of the kidnapper and compel her to deliver up the baby to its lawful owner.

But if women turn to account their children in a criminal court, men are apt to see what they can do in similar circumstances with their wives. A few years ago a well-known man was convicted at the Old Bailey of fraud, and his counsel, unable to tackle the facts, appealed for mercy because of his client's former position and domestic happiness. In a peroration of remarkable intensity he asked the jury to send the man in the dock back to his devoted wife, whom he pictured at that very moment sitting by the fireside, trembling with anxiety lest the husband she loved should be separated from her. He asked them not to break her heart and not to smash the peace and beauty of that perfect home. Those of us who heard him were deeply touched, for the position of the devoted wife roused all our chivalry, and we were sincerely sorry when we realised that the verdict meant that the person who loved the prisoner despite his faults, and who had stood by him loyally in all his troubles, was to suffer more than the convict. However, we quickly recovered our sense of proportion when a Scotland

Yard inspector informed the judge that after enduring years of ill-treatment by the prisoner his wife had left him and until his arrest had gone in terror of her life because of his threats. She had often complained to the police of his brutality, and the inspector added that she would not be happy until she knew her husband was safely under lock and key.

The judge promptly locked him up for four years !

It would be easy to fill pages with stories of Mr. Justice Darling and the Old Bailey, where he has presided over so many dramatic trials and where he has so often relieved some squalid tragedy by a humorous sally.

"I don't know why you calls me a professional burglar," exclaimed a prisoner to him. "I have only done it once before and I have been nabbed both times." "Oh, I do not mean to infer that you have been very successful in your profession," said the judge, in a courteous tone.

But I must resist the temptation to write about Darling, because there are several amazing trials over which he did not preside clamouring for attention. The novelist will find every variety of romance in the annals of the Old Bailey. There is not a plot conceived by the most imaginative writer which cannot be out-matched by them. Take one Old Bailey variant of that common problem, the position of the widow who loses her fortune if she marries again and who, consequently, finds herself in a dilemma when she falls in love.

That was how Mrs. Canning, of Bishop's Stortford, was situated when she decided to marry John Edwards, a good-looking man of forty who was utterly incapable of earning a living because he was blind. As the late Mr. Canning had left his widow two hundred a year during her widowhood only she was faced by the prospect of starvation if she became Mrs. Edwards. She and her lover thought they would solve all their

difficulties by marrying secretly under false names, but by one of those extraordinary coincidences which would not be tolerated in fiction the clergyman who performed the ceremony in a London church in which they had never been before, had for the first and only time in his life dined the previous week in the house opposite the one in which Mrs. Canning resided. When the marriage was an accomplished fact the clergyman casually disclosed his knowledge of her, little realising the stupefaction he was to cause. Of course, he could not be expected to foresee that, owing to his disclosure a very daring and desperate crime would be attempted and that it would lead to a sensational trial at the Old Bailey.

The solicitor in charge of the late Mr. Canning's investments was a gentleman of the name of Gee, and by means of a stratagem he was lured to a house in a street off Commercial Road, Whitechapel. There he was tied to a chair in the best melodramatic manner and threatened with death if he did not sign a cheque for eight hundred pounds, the cash at the bankers to the credit of the Canning estate. Furthermore, he was called upon to sign documents releasing the whole of the investments. The leader of the three men who forced him to comply with their wishes declared that he was Mrs. Canning's brother and that he had decided that Mr. Gee was not to be trusted with so much money.

The elderly lawyer was soon left alone when he had signed the necessary cheque and papers, but he managed after three hours' struggle to free himself and elude the conspirator who had remained on guard in the house. Once he was in the street he was quite safe, and he was in time to stop payment of the cheque and give information to the police which enabled them to capture the gang.

It was not publicly known until the three men were in the dock at the Old Bailey that Edwards was the

secret husband of Mrs. Canning, the widow who had been afraid to announce her second marriage owing to the financial penalty it carried with it. That changed the entire character of the proceedings, and, incidentally, saved the trio from very severe punishment. Had they actually injured Mr. Gee they would have been sent to penal servitude for many years, but they were lucky to escape with comparatively short sentences of imprisonment. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the whole conspiracy was that the originator of it should have been totally blind. He had engineered the attack on Mr. Gee and it had been his subtle brain which had devised the scheme whereby his wife was to gain possession of her first husband's fortune. In the dock, however, he made anything but a pathetic figure, for his tall, athletic frame and strong, handsome features detracted attention from the curious lifelessness of his expression. I wonder if the prisoner guessed the reason for the murmur of astonishment which passed through the court when Mrs. Canning entered the witness-box. Did he know it was because her lack of loveliness was a startling contrast to the classic beauty of his face? Yet there is no doubt they were in love with one another, for when the warders escorted Edwards from the dock his wife rushed forward and seizing his hand, covered it with kisses.

"I will wait for you," she cried, with a pride and determination which thrilled the onlookers. The little scene, coming at the end of a trial full of dramatic and quaint touches, affected everybody who witnessed it. But Mrs. Canning had reason to be grateful to her second husband, because he had arranged the capture of Mr. Gee in such a way as to render it impossible for the police to connect her with the affair.

Many another man has married for money and discovered that he has been fooled. One of these was Leonard Ashley, son of a banker and cousin of an earl. Ashley had a ruinous five years in the Army and after

that three more in the West End. He fell into the hands of blackmailers who deprived him of every penny he had and compelled him to exhaust the patience and liberality of his generous father. But his errors and mistakes were kept sufficiently secret to enable him to continue membership of seven expensive clubs, including the Reform and the United Services.

At a moment when he was an exile from his family and existing on scraps of charity he was coaxed into marriage by a flashy young woman who produced documents which apparently entitled her to thirty thousand pounds as soon as she had a husband. Within a week of the ceremony Ashley knew he had been tricked, and his position was worse than ever. Then it was that the head waiter at the United Services missed a piece of valuable plate. Of course, he did not suspect the well-dressed Ashley, whose real financial position was not suspected because no one knew of his quarrel with his father. But there was a mild sensation at the Reform when it began to be noticed that silver spoons and forks were vanishing, and, while the steward there was worrying, members of Ashley's other clubs were complaining of money stolen from their overcoats and waiters in charge of the silver were being dismissed because of shortage in their stock.

Hypnotised by repeated successes and escapes and emboldened by an inability to scent danger, Ashley became bolder, and finally gave himself into the hands of the head waiter at the United Services by a clumsy theft. Once he was arrested there was no difficulty in bringing home to him his guilt, for at his lodgings were found numerous articles stolen from the clubs as well as several pawn-tickets referring to property belonging to all of the seven of which he was a member.

A man of birth, position and education in the dock at the Old Bailey is always a moving sight. Ashley was by no means the first of the Raffles, and he did not look as though he could ever be a hero of an exciting

midnight adventure. He simply wilted in his agony, and when the judge sentenced him to seven years his tongue was too dry to enable his moving lips to utter a sound. But the tense silence which followed the judge's decision was broken by a woman's shriek, and then it became known that the gently-nurtured mother of the accused had disguised herself in old clothes borrowed from one of her maids and with her head and face enveloped in a shawl had sat in the gallery and watched her son's trial. The scene, however, was quickly over, and the crowd was staring at the repulsive features of Ashley's successor in the dock, a man charged with murder, when the aristocratic convict went on his way to serve his sentence. Downstairs he was accosted by a clerk who had been sentenced to the same number of years for embezzling cheques at the bank where he had been employed.

"You fool," he cried, on seeing Ashley. "When you were about it why didn't you steal enough to give you a good time. Fancy running the risk of seven years for the sake of a few paltry pounds!"

"I will act on your advice next time," said the convict, but there was no "next time" in his case, for he did not survive his first conviction.

Strangely enough, in the second year of his punishment, Ashley in his capacity as an attendant in the prison infirmary found himself waiting on a man who had been in the service of the Reform Club, and who recognised him at once as a member he had often served. This reminds me of the story related of the son of a marquis who twenty-five years ago was given five years' penal servitude at the Old Bailey by the late Mr. Justice Wills. When he was at Parkhurst Prison he was told off to tidy up the cell of an elderly convict who was for reasons of health unable to do the work himself:

"Wot's yer name?" asked the ancient "lag," in a surly tone.

"I am Lord So-and-so," was the reply, mentioning a name which was famous before the Wars of the Roses.

The other gazed at him in amazement and then burst into derisive laughter.

"First time in my blooming life I have had a lord-in-waiting!" he cried, with an energy which contradicted his previous protestations of weakness in the presence of the doctor. "A lord-in-waiting! Now I know what it feels like to be a blooming king!"

But the most unique incident connected with the conviction of the marquis's son arose out of the decision of the prison authorities to send him to Lewes Gaol to serve the first nine months of his sentence. It was pointed out that the father of the convict owned the ground on which the gaol was built in addition to a goodly slice of the town itself, and, consequently, there was an immediate alteration of plans, and the "noble lord" went elsewhere.



## CHAPTER IV

**GONE** are the days when influence counted for more than merit in the appointment of judges and it was possible for a man who had left a very stormy youth behind him to find himself on the Bench. I merely recall that unpleasant era to mention an experience of a judge at the Old Bailey who recognised in the person in the dock one of the acquaintances who had helped him to paint the town red forty years previously. "What has become of all your old associates?" his lordship asked, thinking that the fellow had not recognised him. Instantly came the pat reply, "Oh, they are all hung except your lordship and myself."

In these more enlightened times such an incident would be quite impossible, though more than once a sensitive High Court judge has missed an Old Bailey sessions in order to avoid trying a former friend. Two years ago the son of a recently-deceased judge of great eminence was sentenced in India for a series of mean frauds. Judges, like all of us, have experienced the humiliation of seeing their names trampled in the mud by erring relations.

That most remarkable of forgers, James Townshend Saward, known for thirty years in the underworld as "Jim the Penman," was a member of a distinguished county family which provided the State with several famous servants, including two judges. He was connected through his mother with the noble family of Townshend, and, after an expensive education, he was called to the Bar, and as he had private means amounting to five hundred a year, it was expected that he would earn a respectable position in his profession.

Saward was a very clever and intelligent boy, but, as soon as his extravagances wiped out his capital he unhesitatingly and unflinchingly took to forgery, and before he was thirty he was a master of every form of penmanship human ingenuity or eccentricity could devise. The most illegible signature gave him no trouble, and he had a special gift for detecting traps for crooks of his kidney. He may be said to be the first gentleman—using the word in its generally accepted form—to make crime his profession. He may also be described as the most successful “Raffles” the world has ever known.

There have been several well-born crooks since “Jim the Penman” ended his days as a convict, but none of them have had anything like a clear run of thirty years before knuckling under to the law. The great feature of his career was his immunity from arrest. He was on friendly terms with hundreds of criminals and yet none of them ever betrayed him, although whenever it suited his own purpose he did not hesitate to betray them. A distinguished barrister once met him in the Strand and invited Saward to accompany him to the Old Bailey, where he was prosecuting a burglar. “Thank you, I have an engagement,” said “Jim the Penman,” with an inscrutable smile, and turned down a side street. It was many years before the barrister heard that the burglar had been a friend of Saward’s, and that the very offence for which he was convicted had been committed with the sole object of obtaining for Saward the cheque book (and specimen signatures) of the wealthy owner of the burgled house.

The day came, however, when Saward and one of his chief confederates were conducted into the dock at the Old Bailey and the world heard for the first time of his astounding exploits. It was due entirely to an absent-minded mistake on the part of another of his friends that led to his arrest, but once in custody the

daring criminal, who had moved with equal ease in the drawing rooms of Mayfair and in the criminal dens of Whitechapel, collapsed and showed the white feather. He was so terrified of his approaching fate that there was no pride in his expression when counsel related how he had secured copies of the signatures of prominent solicitors by bringing actions against himself under assumed names. When he remitted the sum for which he was sued and the lawyer paid him by cheque, he proceeded to imitate the latter and victimise him to the extent of hundreds of pounds. Saward described himself as a "labourer," and the police did not trouble to correct him, for it was the object of the authorities to spare his many highly-placed relations as much of the prisoner's ignominy as possible.

Before the judge sentenced him to be kept in prison for the remainder of his life "Jim the Penman" made a whining appeal for mercy, and with remarkable impudence pleaded that his conviction was due to his ignorance of the law! This was pretty cool coming from a barrister, but Saward had to play up to his assumed rôle of labourer. It reminds me of the ingenious counsel who asked an Old Bailey jury to be merciful to his client because he was young and an orphan. There was no doubt about the prisoner's youth—he was only twenty—and if it could not be denied that he was an orphan the fact carried less weight than it might have done because the charge against him was the murder of both his parents!

When it became necessary to find "Jim the Penman" some occupation in gaol—the usual tasks were beyond him as he was nearly sixty—he was invited to state the job for which he considered himself best suited. "I will sign the governor's letters for him," he answered, with a grin. The offer was not accepted, and for years "Jim the Penman" never had the opportunity of handling a pen.

There is no limit to the humorous remarks of prisoners

and convicts. "Have you anything to say before I pass sentence?" enquired a judge when the hoary old sinner in the dock had been convicted on the clearest evidence. "Yes, my lord," he answered, promptly, "I plead youth and—" "Youth!" exclaimed his lordship, with a frown, "Why, you must be sixty at least." A broad grin preceded the convict's retort. "I did not mean my own youth, my lord," he said, "I meant the youth of my counsel." It only remains to add that the counsel was then known as Rufus Isaacs, afterwards the most prominent man of his time at the Bar. But that great lawyer and statesman has a relish for stories against himself. He was in the same arena when his client unexpectedly pleaded guilty to the theft of the horse with which his name was coupled in the calendar. Now young Isaacs had spent many laborious hours constructing the most ingenious defence, and, as he had also composed a speech with which he intended to free the prisoner and at the same time raise his status considerably in his profession, he was greatly annoyed when the plea of guilty was recorded. I fancy it was the late Mr. Justice North who agreed to the young barrister's request to be allowed to address the court, but when his lordship summed up he did so with a terseness which reduced to laughter the serious effort of the future Lord Chief Justice. "Gentlemen," he said, with that gravity for which he was famous, "the prisoner in the dock said he stole the horse, but his counsel says he did not. In considering your verdict, gentlemen, you will remember that at the time of the theft the prisoner was present and Mr. Rufus Isaacs was not."

Lord Reading was the most difficult counsel at the Bar to hoodwink, and it was said of him that he seldom lost a case because he never lost his temper. Probably the greatest duel between counsel and prisoner was his cross-examination of Seddon, the murderer of Miss Barrow. Seddon displayed a cleverness which made

him a very formidable antagonist. He apparently had a convincing explanation of everything he had done, but when Isaacs tackled him on the subject of his victim's money the prisoner was in his efforts to exculpate himself just a trifle too exact. He made the mistake of remembering trivialities which an innocent man must have forgotten, and, if he had been cute enough to know when to admit his memory was at fault, he might have been acquitted.

"Had they sent anybody else to prosecute me," said Seddon, in the condemned cell, "I should have got off, but the Attorney-General was too much for the jury."

When he was at the Bar Rufus Isaacs steered clear of murder trials, but he was generally to be found on one side or the other in cases dealing with frauds. He would have revelled in proving the guilt of a crook like Walter Watts, who terminated a Jekyll-Hyde existence by being the unwilling pivot of a sensational and dramatic Old Bailey drama. Watts was a wealthy patron of the arts in the West End and a clerk in the City at one and the same time. He ran two theatres and gambled away a fortune when his salary was £200 a year! He had a house in Mayfair and another at Brighton, and the horse he rode in Rotten Row was a thoroughbred. How he kept it up, the pose of millionaire, for so long is amazing, but at last he was detected and arrested. He then owed his employers £70,000, and he owed other creditors nearly as much again. The scoundrel thought he would protect himself from prosecution by becoming a shareholder in the insurance company which employed him, and he was the owner of a one pound share when a Lord Chief Justice came down to the Old Bailey to defend him. Cockburn was then in the meridian of his career at the Bar, and he assured Watts that he would not be convicted as he could not legally steal that which belonged to him by virtue of his being one of the

proprietors of the insurance company. The prosecution, however, countered this lawyer-like device by charging Watts in a second indictment with having stolen a piece of paper of the value of one penny. The piece of paper was, of course, the cheque on which he had written the order to pay the fourteen hundred pounds which was the subject of the first charge, and it was for the second offence that he was sentenced to ten years. The severity of the sentence following upon his conviction after Cockburn's emphatic promise of acquittal completely unnerved Watts, and, although he struggled for several seconds to address the court in the midst of a painful silence, he could not utter a word, and he was led away dazed.

That night he committed suicide within a few yards of the court where he had been sentenced, and when they found his dead body they also came upon the corpse of another convict who had, almost simultaneously with Watts, taken his life to escape the consequences of his crime.

## CHAPTER V

"MAY I call my mother?" asked a very pretty girl who was charged with a very daring theft. Mr. Justice Lawrence hastened to grant permission, and presently a soberly-dressed woman tottered towards the witness-box, pressing her handkerchief to her eyes, and was assisted to the place where witnesses stand by a sympathetic attendant. It was almost impossible to listen to her faint replies without experiencing heart-ache, and everybody in court was relieved when, having testified in sobbing whispers to the comfort and joy her daughter had always been until this unfortunate affair, she tottered away dabbing her eyes. The judge was so deeply touched by the spectacle of the mother's grief that when the jury convicted the girl he merely bound her over. I wonder if he ever heard that the witness was no more prisoner's mother than she was his! Certainly no one guessed that the reason why she used her handkerchief so freely while in the witness-box was to prevent counsel discovering that there was not the remotest facial resemblance between herself and her "daughter." Perhaps the little ruse did not injure the prestige or majesty of the law. It had its humorous side just as another device also successfully employed in the same court.

Again the prisoner was a girl and again the jury had to convict, although they did their best to help her by recommending her to mercy. Before his lordship, however, could pass sentence, the barrister who appeared for the defence announced that there was a young man who was willing to marry the accused should the judge decide not to send her to prison. There was a pathetic

allusion to two fond hearts anxious to beat as one if they were not separated by prison bars, and eventually the girl was remanded on bail until the next sessions, so that in the interval she might become the wife of the good young man who was willing to devote his life to saving her from the evil influences of her former companions. When next the matter was brought to his lordship's notice the spotless marriage certificate was produced, and because of this the sentence of the court was that the prisoner should be bound over. She was, therefore, set free, and she cheerfully went off to join her husband, whom she had married for the second time the previous week—to be his partner in crime, as subsequent joint convictions proved—for she was young in years but old in crime, a fact which had been discreetly kept from the knowledge of the judge or the little plot would have miscarried.

But these things are mere trivialities compared with the great dramas of love and passion which we see unfolded at the Old Bailey from time to time. Judges and lawyers can joke, but none can forget that a human life is at stake, and a nervous dread of what may happen next is not confined to the person in the dock. It is shared by every sensitive man and woman in the crowded court, and the judge cannot conceal his emotion in the scarlet of his robes or lose his humanity in the greatness of his position.

We have short memories and we are apt to give the monopoly of praise and cleverness to the particular counsel who has secured the latest acquittal in a murder trial, but there were great barristers before Marshall Hall, Simon and Curtis Bennett, and one of these happily is still with us although he no longer appears in court. I refer to Sir Edward Clarke, statesman, devoted churchman, and brilliant lawyer. In my opinion none of his contemporaries could have saved Adelaide Bartlett's life when she was tried at the Old Bailey in 1886 for the murder of her husband. The case



was an extraordinary one and the facts disclosed proved that truth is more daring than fiction. Sir Edward led a forlorn hope, and the Government seemed to make it more forlorn for the defence when it sent Sir Charles Russell, Attorney-General, to prosecute.

Adelaide was a young girl in her teens with a romantic history—there was a mysterious English father in the background, a father whose name she did not know—when she met Edwin Bartlett, the owner of six grocery shops in London. He was nearly double her age and she was practically a schoolgirl, and when he fell in love with her at first sight and proposed she agreed to marry him on the condition that immediately after the ceremony she returned to the convent on the continent where she was completing her education.

Their second meeting took place at the Parish Church of Croydon when they were married, and for two years she remained abroad, her husband visiting her occasionally. When at last they settled down in a house in London the girl-wife found her stodgy middle-aged husband uninteresting and life became very dull. It was then that they made the acquaintance of a young Wesleyan minister, whose handsome appearance and ingratiating manners won the affections of the Bartletts. A few months passed, and then there took place an interview which must be almost unique, for the young minister called on Bartlett and informed him that as there was a danger of his falling in love with Mrs. Bartlett he had decided not to see either of them again. It might be supposed that the well-to-do grocer agreed with him, but Bartlett was a peculiar man, and he insisted on the acquaintance being maintained, and actually informed the minister that having already perceived the trend of Mrs. Bartlett's attitude towards him, he had altered his will, and, instead of cutting her off with a shilling if she married again, had left her everything without any conditions whatever.

This strange interview was still fresh in the memories

of all concerned when Bartlett was taken ill, and one night, his wife, who had been sitting at the foot of his bed, awoke out of a doze and discovered that he was dead. This was her story of his end, but when the doctor's certificate stated that the cause of death was an overdose of chloroform, suspicion was directed against the young wife, and when it was discovered that she had commissioned the Wesleyan minister to buy chloroform for her she was arrested. Immediately afterwards her friend was also detained.

Before the trial opened at the Old Bailey all these facts had become subjects of general conversation, and to the public at large it seemed that the prosecution had a very simple task. It was the old story of the eternal triangle. Two men and one woman, and the one woman married to the man she did not love. That the methods employed to secure the chloroform were suspiciously roundabout could not be denied, but Adelaide Bartlett swore that she was absolutely innocent, and as for her fellow-prisoner, he maintained that he had never had the slightest reason to suspect the use to which the chloroform was to be put.

The trial opened with a dramatic surprise. The Crown, doubtful of securing a conviction without the assistance of the male prisoner, offered no evidence against him, and he was discharged so that he might appear in the witness-box and give evidence against the unhappy woman in the dock.

Enormous crowds thronged the court and the approaches to it throughout the six days of the trial. The romantic story was told by numerous witnesses and experts dealt in unromantic but convincing manner with the medical issues. Sir Edward Clarke battled valiantly from first to last on behalf of his client, and by sheer genius he managed to lessen the force of innumerable damaging statements and facts. His special triumph was his cross-examination of the poison experts, and in a long and brilliant speech,

often interrupted by the noise caused by the thousands who awaited the verdict in the street, he pressed home every point he could in favour of the woman in the dock. She made a tragic figure in black, her cheeks deathly pale and her eyes alight with agony, but all the time she was keenly alive to what was taking place, and her fixed stare of blank terror in the direction of the witness-box when evidence was given against her was very pathetic. Sir Edward picked the prosecution to pieces, and amongst other things he maintained that there was no sensible reason why his client should have murdered her husband. He emphasised the fact that Edwin Bartlett had suffered from a fatal disease, and that Mrs. Bartlett had known that she had only to possess her soul in patience a little longer to be free to marry again if she wished. That the grocer implicitly trusted his wife was evident by his having chosen her second husband for her, and letters were read in the handwriting of the dead man showing that he had been proud that the Wesleyan minister was in love with his wife. I do not know of any other instance of perfectly honourable relations between two men and a woman leading to the most serious of criminal charges, but there were many unique points in the Bartlett trial, which may be described as a super-melodrama.

I have already indicated that the verdict was in favour of the prisoner, but I ought to add that the jury declared there was a good deal of suspicion attaching to her. His personal triumph had the extraordinary effect on Sir Edward Clarke of making him break down in court and sob, but, as he explained, he had lived with the case for weeks, and his nervous tension had to be relieved somehow. The grateful woman in the dock informed him that he was more eloquent than all the Jesuit orators she had heard, a compliment which amused Sir Edward, who is, of course, a famous champion of Protestantism.

It is very seldom that a verdict of not guilty is received unfavourably by those present in court. It is only human to be affected by the sufferings of the person in the dock, and forget the victim of his or her crime. There have been instances, of course, when such a verdict has aroused much controversy, but as a rule Old Bailey juries display acumen, and their decisions have been correct invariably.

In less important cases than murder trials they have, however, sometimes earned the sharp criticisms of the presiding judge. A few years ago when an obvious rogue was acquitted, his lordship snapped out at the occupants of the jury-box, "Well, gentlemen, I am glad to say that the verdict is yours and not mine."

Previous to that another jury had convicted when the evidence clearly pointed the other way, and the judge was very sarcastic about it. Turning to the prisoner, he said, "Your counsel thinks you innocent, the prosecution thinks you innocent, and I think you innocent. But the jury of your fellow-countrymen in the use of what common sense they possess consider you guilty, and so it remains for me to pronounce sentence. You will be imprisoned for one day, and as that day was yesterday you are free to go about your business."

When Bennett, who murdered his wife on Yarmouth Beach in September, 1900, was being tried for his life at the Old Bailey before Lord Alverstone, another murder trial was taking place under the same roof, and if not so sensational it had its own special features. It is curious to reflect that if Bennett's father had succeeded in preventing him marrying a woman older than himself he might be living to-day, but the father's forbidding of the banns in a London church led to nothing more drastic than a scene in the vestry after the service. Bennett married and inside a few months grew to hate the woman on whose account he had quarrelled with his parents.

About the time Sir Edward Marshall Hall was delivering that famous speech of his on behalf of Bennett, a girl of twenty was standing in the witness-box in the next court, and counsel was slowly extracting from her evidence which she knew would hang the man she loved. George Parker, a handsome young ex-soldier of twenty-three, would never have thought of murdering the prosperous-looking passenger who sat opposite to him in the train from Southampton to Waterloo if he had not suddenly discovered that he had not enough money to pay his full fare to London. It was a trivial excuse for a desperate and cowardly crime, and it was due in the first place to a sudden decision to leave the girl to whom he was engaged at Southampton instead of accompanying her to Portsmouth.

At the moment Parker shot Mr. Pearson dead, the only other passenger in the compartment was a woman, and what her thoughts and feelings were when it occurred to her that, as the only witness of the crime, she was the one person who strove between the murderer and safety can only be imagined. It was a horrible predicament to be shut up in a narrow space with the ruffian, the train travelling at forty miles an hour, each moment threatening to be her last. No wonder when she gave evidence at the Old Bailey she trembled violently and there was a look in her eyes which was eloquent of what her sufferings had been during those few moments when Parker debated with himself as to whether to kill her or let her live. He did actually wound her, but for some inexplicable reason he did not take her life. After his arrest he at once expressed his regret that he had not prevented her giving evidence against him.

But it was the girl who had forsaken her parents to follow him who excited the sympathy of everybody present. Deathly pale, her dark eyes glowing with the light of terror, her lips ever on the move although each

word had to be forced past them, and her convulsive clutch of the rail in front of her, spoke volumes of her acute distress. Falteringly she informed the prosecution where Parker had obtained the revolver, and in an almost inaudible tone she admitted that more than once she had heard him speak of murder.

"May I go now?" she whispered imploringly, when counsel paused in his questions, but the only response was a remorseless shake of the head. "For God's sake let me go," she cried, with sudden energy, "I want to get away from here at once."

A few yards away an old man was pointing at Bennett, and identifying him as the person he had seen on the night Mrs. Bennett had been murdered. The Press of Great Britain was absorbed in the more important trial, which was a blessing in disguise for the poor woman who had to help to tie the rope around her lover's neck. When at last she crawled out of the court and made for the great door leading into Old Bailey the huge crowd which had been waiting to catch a glimpse of some of the principals in the Bennett case mistook her for one of them, and swarmed round her. It was only when she fainted that the mob of curious persons drew back, and the police were able to revive her. They offered to take her back to one of the rooms in the Central Criminal Court and let her rest there and provide her with refreshment, but at the bare thought of entering the building which she regarded as her lover's sepulchre she became terrified. They let her have her own way, and she quickly vanished into an obscurity which was all the more complete because for a few hours in her obscure life she had been dramatically prominent.

There is nothing more heartrending than the sight of a woman's agony amid the forbidding panoply of a great criminal court. By contrast with the scarlet of the judge her face seems terrible in its pallor, and the dignity of the Bench somehow reduces to utter insigni-

fiance the person and personality of a girl fighting for her life or for the life of someone she loves. Parker was as cheerful during his trial as though the whole was a well-staged variety show, but the woman who had been fascinated by his good looks and superficially attractive character might have stood within the shadow of the rope herself, so acute were her sufferings.

Yet I have seen more than one woman face her trial with a marvellously cynical indifference to her fate. One of these was "Chicago May," whose real name was May Vivienne Churchill. In her youth she had been extremely beautiful, and more than one prominent criminal of the underworld of Chicago had died because of her, but that day she faced Mr. Justice Darling she seemed to have lost all her beauty. There was little to indicate that she had once swayed men by her loveliness. Beside her in the dock was a tall, powerfully-built American, who called himself Smith, an obviously fictitious name. He had offered to help "Chicago May" in her quarrel with an old acquaintance in crime, and his offer had been accepted. Smith, a desperate man who feared nobody, in broad daylight in London attempted to murder the object of his friend's hatred by shooting him. He was, of course, immediately arrested, and "Chicago May," being in the vicinity, was made a prisoner, too.

They behaved very quietly until Mr. Justice Darling sentenced them. Once or twice during the trial it **had** seemed that Smith would hurl himself at the man he had tried to murder, for naturally it **was** his evidence which made it certain what the verdict would be, but he had restrained himself. There is no doubt that this person was as great a villain as the ruffian who was in the dock, but English law sensibly refuses to allow individuals to act as judge and jury and right their own wrongs, and, accordingly, Smith's defence was scarcely a defence at all.

"You will be imprisoned for life," said the judge,

in an icy tone, but those in court had scarcely heard him when from the dock came a volley of oaths directed at Mr. Justice Darling, who, in less than twenty seconds, heard himself damned eloquently by the infuriated convict. Smith in his passion tried to climb over the dock as though with the intention of taking the judge by the throat, but, of course, there was no danger of his getting out of reach of the warders who had been on the alert from first to last. He was still hurling abuse when "Chicago May" heard that her fate was to be fifteen years' penal servitude. She contented herself with a defiant glare at his lordship and a muttered threat to the wardress beside her, and then she and Smith disappeared into the prison world, a world as far removed from this one as the grave is.

When we were in the midst of the Great War someone remembered "Chicago May" and petitioned for her release. The Home Secretary examined her prison record, and, convinced that she had been punished sufficiently, he consented to her release on the condition that under the auspices of the Salvation Army she went back to the United States and remained there. The decision was also influenced by the fact that it would be several years before she could meet Smith again, for the latter was not due for release until 1922.

Last year Smith, broken and tamed by British penal methods, crept out of Portland Prison with a warder to take him to the station and accompany him to London. From London he travelled to the United States, and there he is now, a shadow of his former self and no longer the daring international crook he once was. He will not repeat the trick of a loquacious and sprightly fellow-American, who, at the end of a term of penal servitude in England, went to America with a forged letter of introduction from the governor of Dartmoor. On the strength of it he secured a week-end invitation to the house of a former governor of Sing Sing, who believed his story that he had spent



some years examining the social conditions of the masses and the prison system of Great Britain. Before that week-end ended the ex-governor was the poorer by a considerable sum of money and all his wife's jewellery.

The sternest of judges has a horror of Old Bailey scenes, and there is no competition to take murder trials when the accused are women. In the early part of the nineteenth century there was a judge of the High Court who resigned rather than run the risk of being called upon to sentence a fellow-creature to death. This was Sir William Horne, in his time Attorney-General, a great lawyer and keen politician. Horne had in his youth been present at a trial at the Old Bailey in the course of which a woman had collapsed in hysterics on hearing her son convicted of murder. That memory remained with him, and, although on his appointment to the Bench it was still vivid he was under the impression that his judicial duties would be confined to civil causes. But shortly after his promotion he found himself on the rota for the Old Bailey, and he at once resigned. The Government gave him a minor appointment which carried with it a third of the salary he had received as judge, but he was content to be a Master in Chancery, and he did not complain of his sudden descent from importance to unimportance.

Horne apparently acted on the principle that no man is good enough to consider himself entitled to decide the fate of another man, however bad, but when this rather silly aphorism was enunciated in the hearing of the late Sir Henry Hawkins, that intrepid and fearless judge retorted, "No man living is entitled to consider he has the right to take another man's life, and it is my duty to inculcate that doctrine from the Bench."

## CHAPTER VI

THERE were many dramatic incidents during the Bottomley trial which were unrecorded at the time. It will be remembered that, because he conducted his own defence, the prisoner was permitted by Mr. Justice Salter to occupy a seat just behind the row reserved for counsel. Many nervous persons may have thought that this afforded the most notorious swindler of the present century the opportunity of imitating the example of Whittaker Wright and committing suicide if the verdict went against him. But there was never any danger of that because there was always as close to Bottomley as his own shadow an astute detective who watched his every movement.

Several weeks before he was arrested Scotland Yard knew that he would be "inside"—the polite term the police use to indicate conviction—before Derby Day. But Bottomley, even when summoned at Bow Street, was so confident that he would repeat the great bluff he practised so successfully at the Guildhall in 1909, that he would not think of disaster. However, the authorities took no risks, and the M.P. was shadowed day and night until the final catastrophe.

There came the day, however, when Bottomley realised that the game was up, and he drove away from the Old Bailey conscious that it would be some years before he was a free man again. On his arrival at the residence of a friend in the West End, his host hinted that there was nothing for it but flight. The M.P. promptly drew him over to the window which commanded a view of the street corner. "Look there," he said, with a grim smile, and it required no cleverness

to identify the two detectives who were watching the house.

But the most dramatic moment for Bottomley was when it was borne upon him that he was at last in the implacable grip of the law. Throughout the greater part of his trial he had all the privileges to which counsel are entitled, and, as he was allowed out on bail after each day's proceedings, he could be forgiven for believing that there was very little inconvenience in being on trial at the Old Bailey. On the last day, however, when there was an adjournment for lunch, and he made as if to walk from the dock to his group of friends in court, a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder and a warder gripped him by the wrist. He protested as he was hustled down the steps and into a corridor beneath the court, the corridor of the damned and the hopeless. And there he was searched like a common pickpocket, and when he returned to the dock a warder stood so close to him on either side that he could scarcely move his arms. Then Bottomley knew that he was trapped, and, although conscious he was not the man to take his own life, the precautions adopted by the authorities must have chilled his very soul.

One of his earliest encounters at Wormwood Scrubs was with his old acquaintance, Hooley, and it must have been a meeting provocative of tantalising memories to both of them. Hooley preceded Bottomley into penal servitude by less than a couple of months, and when the former, charged with his crimes, appealed to Bottomley for assistance he was refused because the M.P. was then actually cadging all his friends for money to pay for his own defence. Apparently Hooley believed that Bottomley had treated him shabbily, because when they met in prison he rejected his friendly overtures and refused to speak to him. There is something pathetic in the thought of these two old men decked out in the grotesque garb of gaol indulging in a petty quarrel amid the ruins of their hectic careers. Thirty

years ago it was nothing unusual for five hundred pounds to be paid for an introduction to the then resplendent Ernest Terah Hooley, and he certainly attained heights Bottomley never reached, but there was little difference when they "crashed," although Hooley will be out of prison three years before Bottomley.

"He couldn't go straight even in a strait-waistcoat," remarked Bottomley at the time of Hooley's first conviction.

"Bottomley in Parliament!" said Hooley, when the hero of many a bankruptcy petition was returned for a London constituency. "Now, indeed, the House of Commons is common!"

The repartee reminds one of the witty squabble between two Irishmen convicted of petty offences in the exercise ground at the prison Bottomley now inhabits. "What's the time?" said the one who had been sentenced to twelve months hard for stealing milk cans, to his companion who had been given a similar term for purloining a valuable gold watch. "Milking-time," was the prompt reply.

Besides his two appearances in the dock at the Old Bailey, Bottomley was interested in several famous trials there. When Crippen was brought back from Canada, Bottomley, hearing that funds for the defence were very meagre, got into communication with the murderer and, posing as a philanthropist, offered to contribute a hundred pounds towards his expenses on the condition that the prisoner supplied him with an exclusive confession of guilt should he be convicted. It was an extraordinary as well as a ghastly bargain, and it is difficult to imagine a man fighting for his life with the aid of money subscribed in the hope that he would be convicted! There was a good deal of publicity given to this amazing transaction between the quack doctor and the quack financier, and amongst those who read it and never forgot it was a certain insurance

agent in north London, who, of course, had no idea at the time that he would one day stand in the dock at the Old Bailey as the central figure of a very sensational trial. For the insurance agent was Frederick Henry Seddon, and when the jury had returned that verdict of guilty which many eminent barristers thought was not justified by the evidence, and he was taken to the condemned cell, his nervous dread of the future was intensified by the fear that Horatio Bottomley might publish a confession alleged to have been made by him. Every person who visited the doomed man was assured that he would never confess, and in nearly every letter he wrote he warned his friends and relations not to believe anything connecting him with an avowal of guilt. There was good cause for the murderer's anxiety. Bottomley was even then engaged in several fraudulent transactions, and was, as usual, at his wit's end to raise funds to stave off the evil day, but he was always willing to produce a hundred or two if there was a so-called "confession" to be bought. It did not matter to him whether it was faked or not, and Seddon knew enough of Bottomley to be frightened of his unscrupulousness. Had Seddon and Crippen been reprieved it is more than likely that Bottomley would have made their acquaintance in penal servitude, but the ex-M.P. has been spared that embarrassment.

Bottomley's favourite judge, the late Sir Henry Hawkins, was placidly watching that terrific struggle in the dock when Fowler attacked his fellow-murderer, Milsom. An elderly woman, waiting below the court for her turn to take her trial, was startled by the noise. "It is not safe to be here," she said, drawing away from the entrance to the steps which lead to the dock. It was certainly not safe for her because she happened to be Mrs. Dyer, the Reading baby-farmer, who was destined to be sentenced to death the following day.

But her fears departed when Milsom and Fowler were

removed, and there was no indication that a murderous fight had taken place when she arrived in the court. With a benevolent smile she surveyed judge and jury, the little dark eyes blinking and the thin lips doing their best to look warm and human. In her right hand she clutched a Moody and Sankey hymn-book, and she devoted her attention to the contents and seemed to derive immense satisfaction from doing so. It was with difficulty she was persuaded that she could not hold a prayer-meeting for one in the dock, but she made up for this deprivation by singing hymns and delivering lay sermons elsewhere to the warders and also to the prisoners on remand. And yet she had murdered at least a dozen helpless infants and she was the most infamous woman the Old Bailey dock had ever contained.

Considering the woman's terrible crimes the trial was, on the surface at any rate, remarkably placid, but with the single exception of the occupant of the dock everybody in court suffered from a sort of nervous horror increased by an irrepressible sympathy with the accused. One simply could not help it. Witnesses described in detail the appalling cruelty and callousness of the creature who smiled and smiled, and was a murderer, but one could not get away from the fact that she was an old woman, and there seemed something loathsome in the thought that the State had assembled a small army of officials in order that it might hang her by the neck until she was dead.

There is no doubt that if it were left to the governors and staffs of our prisons no woman would ever be executed. That final scene on the scaffold of a half-conscious woman feebly struggling against her doom has broken the nerve of more than one battle-scarred veteran who has found his way into the prison service. Mr. Justice Hawkins was grim and impassive, but I am sure that he suffered, too. The old judge had a heart, despite Sir Edward Clarke's opinion that he was

heartless. It was not, of course, at this trial that he exclaimed, when in the act of sentencing an apparently lifeless woman in the dock to death, "Someone tell her that it won't be carried out, for God's sake tell her that." The man who said that was no practitioner of refined cruelty.

Mrs. Dyer heard her doom with a watery smile and meekly bowed her farewells to the jury who had found her guilty. A little later in the cell at Newgate she opened her beloved hymn-book and crooned a series of hymns which sounded worse than sobs. She was perfectly happy, however, and right to the end she talked and sang religion and died with the firm conviction that she was going straight to heaven. That was twenty-seven years ago, and it is just possible that Mrs. Dyer has not arrived in heaven yet, but she may have found mercy in another world, because there can be no doubt now that in this she was not sane.

## CHAPTER VII

THEY form a dismal procession of degenerates, those doctors who have earned infamous notoriety for themselves, and their very names suggest the sinister and secret ways of crime. "When a doctor goes wrong he is the first of criminals," said Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, speaking through Sherlock Holmes. "He has nerve and he has knowledge." It is fortunate, however, that comparatively few medical men have waged war on the public, and those who have were for the most part "the scum of the profession," to quote Sir James Crichton-Browne. Smethurst, that most successful of criminals, belonged, undoubtedly, to the scum. His extraordinary adventures cannot be related in full, but an outline will serve to reveal a perverted cunning without parallel. Not many murderers have passed, after conviction, from the dock to liberty, but Smethurst not only outwitted the law but he fooled the leaders of his own profession, neatly enticing into a blunder the renowned Dr. Taylor, and thereby escaping the consequences of his crime. Furthermore, Smethurst turned his misdeeds to profit, actually securing the property of his victim after serving twelve months' hard labour for committing bigamy with her!

On the ninth of December, 1858, Thomas Smethurst, who had on the strength of a foreign degree practised medicine in a small way in London, married Isabella Banks at Battersea Parish Church. The lady was twenty-eight; the bridegroom was fifty and had already dabbled in murder and blackmail, but he had had no difficulty in fascinating the neurotic Miss Banks, who had quarrelled with her family, and was looking



for a soul-mate when she made the acquaintance in a Bayswater boarding house of the man who was destined to be her destroyer. The attraction to Smethurst was the lady's money. She had nearly two thousand pounds, and she was in the succession to several thousands more, and when he discovered these facts he proposed to her after their conduct had resulted in the landlady expelling Miss Banks. There was a third figure in the early stages of this drama, the doctor's legal wife, an old woman of seventy, who also resided in the boarding house. The elderly Mrs. Smethurst was one of the chief mysteries of the case. No one knew much about her, and it has never been explained satisfactorily why she should have regarded complacently her husband's courtship and bigamous marriage. Yet she was a spectator of the former, and must have sanctioned the latter because there was nothing secretive about the ceremony. When within a few months Isabella Banks died at Richmond of acute arsenical poisoning, Mrs. Smethurst was residing in a mean street in Chelsea, and she heard the news of the tragedy and of her husband's arrest with an equanimity that suggests she was in his confidence and could foresee the astounding sequel to his trial.

There is no doubt that Smethurst, with the connivance of his wife, took Miss Banks to Richmond with the intention of poisoning her immediately she had made a will in his favour, and he carried his plan to a successful conclusion. The unfortunate woman soon became ill, a doctor was called in, and, his treatment failing, he suspected the presence of poison, and eventually expressed himself emphatically on the subject. The consequence was that, as Miss Banks lay dying, Smethurst was arrested, but an appeal to a soft-hearted magistrate that his detention would kill his wife, led to his release, and he was permitted to return home. However, his presence in the invalid's room failed to save her, and she passed away on May 8rd, 1859,

and, the night before she died, Smethurst wrote to his real wife in London warning her not to be distressed if anything prevented him rejoining her. That was very significant and proves he was expecting to be arrested again. That he was confident of acquittal is also evident from his letter, and according to Serjeant Ballantine it was between his first and second arrest that Smethurst prepared the trap for the medical advisers of the Crown with a view to securing ultimately immunity from punishment for his crime.

The inquest on the body of Miss Banks revealed traces of arsenic and antimony, and Smethurst was duly remitted to the Old Bailey, and, after one trial had been rendered abortive by the illness of a jurymen on the second day, at the following sessions he was convicted before Chief Baron Pollock and sentenced to death. To the general public the result, based as it was on the clearest and strongest evidence, must have been satisfactory, but not so to the medical profession, and an agitation was started which eventually won for the convict a free pardon and immediate release. The motive of the agitators was excellent, for they believed that Miss Banks had not been poisoned by Smethurst and that the Home Office expert, Dr. Taylor, having in the witness-box confessed to one serious blunder, was not unlikely to have been completely mistaken in his views.

Dr. Taylor, one of the principal witnesses for the prosecution, was rightly regarded as the greatest living authority on forensic medicine, but Serjeant Ballantine, who prosecuted Smethurst, maintained that the doctor was cleverly hoaxed by the accused. When the latter had been taken into custody for the second time another examination of his rooms at Richmond had been made, and amongst the numerous bottles found was one containing a colourless liquid. This was at once handed over to Dr. Taylor, who proceeded to apply to a portion of the contents the test for arsenic known

as Reinsch's. It was a simple operation, consisting of the mixing of a minute quantity of hydrochloric acid and the sample of the "colourless liquid," and then placing in the mixture a piece of copper gauze. If there was any arsenic in it, it would attach itself to the copper gauze. Three times, in all, the gauze itself dissolved, but at the fourth attempt Dr. Taylor discovered arsenic, and reported accordingly, but the remainder of the liquid in the bottle, having been subjected to a different test, was seen to contain no arsenic whatever, and was identified as nothing more terrible than a solution of chlorate of potash. When Dr. Taylor's attention was drawn to this he instituted another series of experiments and ascertained that the arsenic he had found had come from his own copper gauze, and he at once admitted his blunder.

This was an accident of which counsel for the defence, Serjeant Parry, naturally made the most, although, strictly speaking, it had no real bearing on the issue, because arsenic and antimony had been discovered in the body of Miss Banks, but it served to create a passion for controversy in those persons who aspire to eminence by short cuts, and they eagerly rushed into print and aired their little learning. The Home Secretary, however, was impressed, and Smethurst was saved, and, although he was instantly arrested again, convicted of bigamy and sent to gaol for a year, he must have felt that he had scored a triumph. When he had served his time he reappeared in a combative mood, and, unabashed, boldly sought the aid of the law to enable him to secure possession of the fortune left by his victim. He was able to prove a will she had signed when on her deathbed, and the verdict of the court being in his favour, Thomas Smethurst, murderer, blackmailer and bigamist, went on his way rejoicing with the wages of his sins.

But I must return to the subject of Dr. Taylor's blunder. It may well be asked what part Smethurst

took in it and how one possessing a very small stock of medical knowledge could have tricked the great toxicologist. Serjeant Ballantine was emphatically of opinion that the prisoner purposely placed the bottle where he knew it must be found, because he anticipated Taylor's procedure, and also because he knew that the authorities were eager to strengthen and buttress their case by tracing arsenic to him. Now, eight years previously, a letter written by Smethurst on the subject of the extraction of teeth had appeared in the *Lancet*, and in the same number there was an article by an eminent chemist, in which it was stated that if chlorates were used Reinsch's test would fail to detect arsenic. Smethurst must have read that article, and Ballantine had no doubt that he recalled it when he was expecting to be arrested for the second time, and that he prepared the bottle accordingly, well aware that Dr. Taylor was the leading exponent of the Reinsch test, and, therefore, almost certain to fall into the trap.

Dr. Taylor was also consulted when the death of Mrs. Ellen Warder was investigated by a coroner's jury at Brighton in the summer of 1866. The name of Dr. Alfred William Warder is unknown to-day, but he was a criminal of exceptional daring and resource, who, on two occasions at least, succeeded where Pritchard and other poisoners failed. He was a widower for the second time when he met Ellen Branwell, the sister of Dr. Branwell, of Brighton, and a whirlwind courtship culminated in a clandestine marriage. At this period Dr. Warder was practising at Penzance, but four months after his third wedding he took his bride to Brighton for a holiday. In view of the sequel it was very significant that the doctor should do this, for each of his previous marriages had been followed by a period of work in Penzance, then a sort of postponed honeymoon and, finally, the death of the bride.

When they arrived at Brighton Dr. Branwell was introduced to his brother-in-law, and took a dislike

to him, but his feelings gave place to anxiety on his sister's behalf when she was prostrated by a mysterious illness. Dr. Taaffe, a leading Brighton practitioner, was called in, but there was no improvement, and when certain symptoms suggested poison to his trained eye the fact that the lady's husband insisted on acting as nurse and servant, and that he allowed no one in the bedroom except Dr. Taaffe, pointed clearly to the person who was the cause of the failure of the remedies. Unfortunately, however, Dr. Taaffe's suspicions came too late to be of material service to the lady, who died the day after a specialist had been summoned by her relatives.

At the beginning of his sister's illness Dr. Branwell, anxious to acquire further information about his brother-in-law's antecedents, had made enquiries, and it was shortly before Mrs. Warder expired that he heard that her two predecessors had also died in mysterious circumstances, and in both these cases the meagre details were curiously akin to Mrs. Warder's, suggesting, in fact, the most terrible of all crimes. Dr. Branwell thereupon applied for a post-mortem and certain organs of the deceased were forwarded to Dr. Taylor, of Guy's Hospital, for examination and report.

The announcement that an inquest would be held created a sensation in Brighton, and rumours filled the air. Strange stories were told of Dr. Warder's past and of the curious ill-luck of the women he had married. It was certainly unfortunate that a man of forty-five should have been bereaved three times, and, the coincidence proving too much for a matter-of-fact public, it was generally believed that he had assisted nature.

Meanwhile, Dr. Warder presented an unruffled demeanour, though he exhibited some emotion when the Chief Constable served him with a subpoena to attend the inquest. It must have looked like a death-warrant to him, and when, that evening, he left his lodgings in

Bedford Square, he quickly recognised the profession of the two men who strolled casually past him, and who were again in the vicinity of the house when he returned, for they were obviously detectives. They watched the suspect so thoroughly that when, a couple of days later, he paid a visit to London, they travelled by the same train ; and the silent " shadowing " of the man who had three murders on his conscience had a sequel which may be termed inevitable. Dr. Warder, faced with the alternative of death by the official hangman or by his own hands, chose the latter, and on his return to Brighton with the detectives in his wake, he engaged a bedroom at the Bedford Hotel, and swallowed sufficient prussic acid to kill a dozen men. The verdict of the jury was "*Felo de se*," and when they came to consider the case of his wife they declared that she had been murdered by her husband. The Brighton police were blamed for not having taken Dr. Warder into custody at once, but, at any rate, his self-execution saved the country the cost of a lengthy and sensational trial.

Of the two French doctors, Pommerais and Castaing, who were convicted of murder, the first-named derived his methods from a study of the report of Palmer's trial. Believing he could improve on the Rugeley poisoner, he insured the widow of a friend for £22,000, induced her to assign the policy to him on the ground that he had lent her a large sum of money, and, having two years previously rehearsed his crime by poisoning his wife's mother, Madame Dubizy, with digitaline, he gave a few doses to Madame de Pauw, and when she died claimed the money from the insurance company. It was the refusal of the latter to pay that created a healthy curiosity in the police concerning Dr. de la Pommerais' unfortunate friend, and after a theatrical and protracted trial in the early part of 1864 the doctor was convicted and guillotined. There was never the slightest chance of escape for him,

although he had very carefully planned his crime, and in his anxiety to leave nothing undone he had taken three months to prepare for the death of Madame de Pauw. Thus, in order to make her sudden illness seem natural, he had persuaded her to throw a heavy weight down a flight of stairs at midnight in the tenement house she was living in, and then to explain the next day that she had met with an accident. Of course, Madame had to have a reason given her for this piece of acting, and so Pommerais explained that it was his intention to inform the insurance company that the lady by whose death they stood to lose £22,000 was seriously ill and to advise them to offer her five thousand pounds to cancel the policy. The widow, who did not boast of a rigid adherence to the moral laws, willingly entered into a conspiracy which she expected would make her rich, and her cupidity was the cause of the strangest of death-bed scenes—the victim smilingly accepting poison from her murderer, animated by the belief that it was all merely make-believe to hoodwink a wealthy insurance company !

Dr. Castaing was a greater villain than Pommerais, for he dabbled in forgery and various minor crimes, besides murdering two brothers with whom he professed to be on terms of undying friendship. The story of the double crime is astounding, and a study of Castaing reveals him as a very sinister personality. Hippolyte and Auguste Ballet were wealthy young men who had not an idea in common. The elder, Hippolyte, was consumptive and a recluse ; Auguste “warmed both hands before the fire of life,” and spent where Hippolyte saved. Their friend, Dr. Castaing, a young man with charming manners and retiring disposition, was constantly with one or other of the brothers, and possessing no means of his own he was practically dependent on them. Knowing that Hippolyte was not many years off the grave, and aware that Auguste was rapidly spending his patrimony, he

suggested to the latter that it would be well if the former died as soon as possible. Auguste signified approval by not protesting, but he was roused to active anger when, a month later, Dr. Castaing informed him that Hippolyte had recently made his will and had bequeathed everything to his brother-in-law. This was a severe shock for the feckless libertine, but events moved rapidly after that, for Castaing, who had access to Hippolyte's rooms day and night, secured the will and burnt it, and murdered Hippolyte by means of morphine. There was a post-mortem and the doctors discovered evidence of a vegetable poison, but a hundred years ago the tests were few and inefficient, and there was no suspicion against Castaing, who received four thousand pounds from Auguste when the latter inherited the whole of his brother's fortune owing to the deceased having left no will.

But four thousand pounds was not enough for a secret sinner of the Castaing breed and he determined to become Auguste's heir and then murder him; and when, to celebrate their triumph, they went for a holiday Castaing presented Auguste with a jug of warm milk containing morphine, and there was a second sudden death in the Ballet family. Again a post-mortem was held, and the doctors were surprised to find that, although he had been perfectly healthy when alive, compared with Hippolyte, in death, Auguste's body internally and externally presented much the same appearance; and it only required the existence of a will in Auguste's handwriting, making Dr. Castaing his sole heir, to point the finger of suspicion at the latter. He was arrested and questioned, and his evasive and contradictory replies encouraged the police to persevere; and they proved that he had murdered Auguste and destroyed Hippolyte's will. Castaing was executed in December, 1828.



## CHAPTER VIII

It is not the temptation of alliteration that makes me couple Palmer and Pritchard. They had much in common and both were notorious hypocrites as well as murderers. Palmer was the greater criminal but Pritchard excelled at hypocrisy. The Rugeley practitioner was a regular church-goer, and carefully recorded in his diary his attendances at Holy Communion. Pritchard also kept a diary which contained many pious remarks, but when, after poisoning his wife, he requested in broken accents that the lid of her coffin might be raised in order that he might kiss her dead lips, he branded himself as an arch-hypocrite without a rival in the annals of crime. Pritchard's motive for killing his mother-in-law and wife is obscure. The old lady was his best friend and warmest admirer—she bought a practice for him in Glasgow, and regarded him as a model son-in-law—and it is certain that Mrs. Pritchard was not slain because she had discovered a vulgar intrigue between her husband and her servant, for she had forgiven his lapse. Neither did he benefit financially by his double crime. The probability is that Pritchard, a peculiarly expert liar, graduated from that comparatively minor weakness to a recklessness which influenced him to take human life. He posed as a friend of Garibaldi—whom he had never seen—he delivered lectures on places where he had never been; and he might have made a fortune as a quack, possessing as he did all the qualities of bluff, bounce and glibness associated with the itinerant “doctor,” but he aimed at respectability and, even if he was cold-shouldered by his Glasgow colleagues, he

succeeded to a certain extent until that day in 1865 he was arrested as the result of an anonymous letter. When brought to trial, the brother of the wife he had murdered sat beside him in the dock, only quitting it when it became obvious that the plausible hypocrite was not the injured innocent his wife's relations thought. The doctor devoted his time after his conviction to writing out texts of scripture and composing three confessions. Two of the latter were false, but his admission of guilt did not flatter the justice of his sentence, and a hundred thousand persons witnessed his execution, the last to be held in Scotland, and did not show any regret.

If ever a man was born in sin, that man was William Palmer. The son of a profligate mother, he was reared in a demoralising atmosphere. Only a miracle kept him out of gaol before he qualified after a brief sojourn at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, for his mother had on three occasions at least to compensate victims of his thefts. When he became a doctor he was heavily in debt, having acquired a partiality for the racecourse and a fondness for the society of the opposite sex, but from the early days of his professional work at Rugeley he realised the necessity of respectability and the local church was seldom bereft of his presence on Sundays. Until a few years ago there was living a gentleman who, as a small boy, had been cuffed by Dr. Palmer for giggling in church less than a month before the doctor was arrested for the murder by poisoning of Cook, and at that time when he had at least three murders to his discredit !

But Palmer committed murder on the same principle that he wagered more money than he could afford. He was utterly reckless as a gambler and as a murderer. When he insured his wife for thirteen thousand pounds, poisoned her and obtained the money from the insurance companies, he brought off a thousand to one chance, and when later he required another large sum

He followed the same procedure in the case of his brother, Walter, but on this occasion the insurance companies declined payment, and the murderer had to try his luck on the turf. It went against him, and he poisoned James Parsons Cook, his friend and racecourse-partner, for the sake of his victim's winnings at the Shrewsbury races. No strychnia—the poison Palmer was accused of having administered—was found in Cook's body, nevertheless, the prisoner was convicted on May 27th, 1856, after a twelve days' trial at the Old Bailey, to which it had been transferred by means of a special Act of Parliament which is known as Palmer's Act. Rugeley, wishing to sever all connection with its best known native, applied to the Home Secretary for permission to change its name. "Why not call it after me, gentlemen," said the minister, with quiet irony to the deputation. His name happened to be Palmerston! Some twenty years later Palmer's mother delivered his epitaph. Tackled by a curiosity-monger who had visited Rugeley to explore the favourite haunts of the celebrated murderer,—who, by the way, has a niche in the Dictionary of National Biography—she admitted her identity in the remarkable words, "Yes, I am Mrs. Palmer. I had seven children, and my saintly Bill was the best of the lot and they hanged him." The "saint" passed away in an orgy of hypocrisy, assisted by the present of a huge Bible from his leading counsel, Serjeant Shee, who had been retained only when Serjeant Wilkins had had to decline the brief because his agitated creditors compelled him to seek a temporary refuge from writs on the other side of the Channel.

Doubt has been cast on the professional qualifications of Crippen and Neil Cream, but with Crippen, at any rate, the "Dr." will be associated for all time. Everybody knows how he poisoned his wife and buried her mutilated remains in a house in Camden Town, but it is not so well known that if he had displayed

even an elementary knowledge of human nature he might have escaped the consequences of his crime. Mrs. Crippen had several weaknesses, but there was no doubt about the strength of her passion for finery, and when the doctor decided to make her disappear he forgot to get rid of her large collection of clothes. He told his story of her sudden departure to America, and "Belle Elmore's" friends noticed at once that she had left her wardrobe behind her, the last thing a woman of her temperament would do. That created suspicion in their minds, they became insistent, and the rest is a matter of recent history. Neil Cream was a lunatic who murdered simply because he had a diseased brain, and he was altogether an eccentric creature who had to be executed because society could not afford to preserve the life of a cruel and treacherous scoundrel. Money was the motive for Lamson's crime, and in this respect he did not differ from Smethurst, Palmer, Pommerais, Castaing and Dr. Webster of Harvard; indeed, mercenary motives have inspired with few exceptions the doctors who have been convicted of murder. Dr. Buchanan, of New York, poisoned Mrs. Buchanan with morphine in 1892, because, having married the lady for her money, he could not agree to her proposal to leave him, and he feared a scandal would adversely affect his position and prospects. Mrs. Buchanan was certified to have died from natural causes, but the Press was not satisfied, and some months after the funeral the enterprising journalists of New York compiled a *dossier* of the doctor's career which caused the police to have the body exhumed. Morphine was found and Dr. Buchanan was executed. This "Press triumph" followed closely on the conviction by similar methods of Carlyle Harris, a medical student, for the murder of a schoolgirl named Helen Potts whom he had secretly married under an assumed name.

We have to go back to the eighteenth century to find

the most remarkable doctor-criminal, for it was in December, 1771, that Dr. Levi Weil, a Dutch Jew who had practised in the city of London, was sentenced to death for murder. In the dock with him were the members of a gang of burglars and cut-throats he had imported from Holland, and as all of them were Jews the trial led to an outbreak of anti-Semitism which lasted for some time. Levi Weil was a veritable Cæsar of crime. The gains he derived from his profession were not sufficient for an ardent worshipper of the Golden Calf, and he organised the gang of criminals. His procedure was simple and very effective. By charging less fees than his rivals he built up a large practice, and when he was called in to attend a wealthy patient he took particular notice of the plate on the side-board, and, whenever possible, ascertained where money and jewellery were kept. This information he passed on to his confederates, who promptly burgled the house and carried off the booty. They ran few risks because they never had to waste time searching for what they wanted, their leader's directions sparing them that ordeal. Burglaries became very frequent once Dr. Levi Weil had established himself as a physician in London, but when a servant was murdered by the gang when defending his mistress's property at "a farmhouse in Chelsea" the authorities bestirred themselves, and a large reward was offered for the detection of the miscreants. No fewer than twenty burglaries had taken place in and around London in the course of six weeks, and in certain outlying districts a state of terror had been created. But the reward had immediate effect, a member of the gang who had been dismissed by Weil for insubordination betraying his former friends to the blind magistrate, Sir John Fielding, the brother of the famous novelist. The redoubtable doctor and his confederates were captured without any trouble, and the chief, his brother and two other Jews were executed. It was estimated that Levi

Weil and his men had brought off close on a hundred burglaries and had been responsible for three murders during the short time they operated.

Martin Sheen, Thomas Monk and Dionysius Wielobycki were three doctors who were convicted of forgery and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Sheen distinguished himself by effecting an escape from Millbank in 1863; and Dr. Monk, a J.P. and D.L. for Lancashire, forged a will in the name of a Preston reedmaker, Edward Turner, who left less than a hundred pounds. His conduct was extraordinary and inexplicable, but in 1858 our tribunals did not concern themselves with psychology, and Dr. Monk, who could not have gained more than sixty pounds by his crime, was sent to penal servitude for life.

Dr. Wielobycki was the most remarkable of the trio. A Pole by birth, he had fled to Edinburgh during a period of political stress in his native country, and had, despite lack of means and linguistic difficulties, attained quite a fashionable connection in the Scottish capital. But he was always in debt, and when he got the opportunity to rob a patient of the name of Darling who resided at Portobello he did so to the extent of four thousand pounds. Thomas Darling, an old man who lived with his two sisters, Margaret and Isabella, had saved six thousand pounds, and when the doctor offered to invest two-thirds of his fortune at a high rate of interest the grateful patient transferred that amount to him. Wielobycki used the money to liquidate his own debts, and paid Darling the agreed interest every quarter, but, as he knew that the old man had not long to live, he was anxious to know how he intended to leave his money. Luck favoured the physician, Darling bequeathing all he had to his sisters, and so the thief had another breathing space. But the problem recurred almost immediately, for Margaret showed signs of decay which told the doctor she had

not long to live. It was known that she wished to leave part of her fortune to a certain nephew, but as this would have led to the discovery of Wielobycki's embezzlement, he induced Isabella, whose handwriting resembled her sister's, to write out a will to his dictation, and this document he made the dying Margaret sign. The signatures of the "witnesses" were attached by the doctor later on.

When Margaret was dead, Isabella, who was completely under the influence of her medical attendant, was the sole heiress to the mythical six thousand, and the doctor volunteered to secure probate of her sister's will for her. This was his initial blunder because it attracted a puzzled attention to himself. The relatives and friends of the Darlings wondered why an eminent Edinburgh physician with, presumably, a fashionable practice should devote so much of his valuable time to the affairs of a working-class family, and, eventually, Margaret Darling's favourite nephew called on the Pole, and announced his intention of disputing the will of his aunt. Wielobycki thereupon suggested a compromise, and, by a cash payment of twelve hundred pounds, he bought the nephew's consent to the destruction of the will. However, the young man did not maintain silence on the subject, and when the police heard of the transaction they investigated the relations between the doctor and the Darlings, and Wielobycki's arrest was, of course, inevitable once enquiries were made. Fashionable Edinburgh crowded the court to witness his humiliation, and, as proof of Wielobycki's standing in the Scottish capital, it may be mentioned that the judge whose turn it was to preside at that particular session had to withdraw because he had been on terms of intimacy with the doctor. Fourteen years' penal servitude was the sentence, after a trial full of sensational revelations.

## CHAPTER IX

**THE** astonishing lack of subtlety and finesse characteristic of the average doctor-criminal was conspicuously exhibited by Philip Cross, who, in 1888, was executed at Cork for the murder of his wife. It might have been expected that he would have improved on the methods of Pritchard, Palmer and other poisoners belonging to his profession, for he lived in an age when a medical man had to possess something more than the meagre professional attainments of the Rugeley poisoner and his prototypes. But crude in their methods as they were, the Irishman was even more clumsy and obvious, and the only mystery about his story is how he ever managed to persuade himself that he had a chance of escaping retribution.

In the early part of the month of October, 1886, the position of Dr. Philip Cross, of Shandy Hall, Dripsey, Co. Cork, was so dull and featureless that it seemed to guarantee immunity from sensation. He was sixty-two, and a lengthy period of service in the army as a surgeon had provided him with a moderate pension, an impaired digestion, an irritable and overbearing manner and a dislike for female society. But at the same time he gave his neighbours the impression that he was devoted to his wife and six children, and they ascribed his failings to his age. He occasionally hunted and fished, but, as a rule, his tall, military figure was conspicuous because of its aloofness. No lady of his acquaintance went out of her way to be more than polite to him, and had it not been for Mrs. Cross's popularity, there would have been extremely few visitors to the pretentiously-named Shandy Hall.



This was the position the morning Dr. Cross heard that his wife had engaged a governess.

"You remember Miss Skinner, don't you?" she said, plainly delighted.

"You mean Mrs. Caulfield's governess?" he remarked, anxious to return to his newspaper.

"Yes. She's leaving at the end of the month because the Caulfield girls are coming out this year," Mrs. Cross explained. "When I heard of it I at once asked her if she cared to come here. The children love her, and she'll be a great help all round. I have never met a girl of her age so capable and so tactful. It's extremely fortunate for us that she wishes to remain in Dripsey."

As the doctor was not particularly interested he resumed his perusal of his morning paper, and he did not refer to the new addition to his household until Effie Skinner had been in his wife's employment a week. Then he merely enquired if she was satisfactory, and he did not give a hint that he had realised that the girl was extremely beautiful and fascinating.

The governess was twenty-one and the doctor sixty-two, and that fact alone was sufficient to render it impossible for Mrs. Cross to suspect the possibility of an intrigue between them. In addition, there was her husband's well-known dislike for the sex to which he often referred as "chattering females." If she desired a third reason there was unmistakable evidence that Effie Skinner was no flirt and that her devotion to the children and to the mother of the children was whole-hearted and genuine.

But where human nature is concerned there can be no rules and regulations. Philip Cross had, in the course of his life, met many beautiful and fascinating women, and there had been a time when, as a young and handsome doctor, he had been sought after by the mothers of marriageable daughters. In those days he had been indifferent to their charms and had steeled

his heart against their advances, and, paradoxically enough, it was not until he was an old man that he was to experience the fires of a youthful passion.

Within a week of the governess's arrival, Shandy Hall seemed to him to have become transformed. The personality of the pretty girl who apparently know how to do everything and who solved every little problem with a promptness that was amazing, suddenly opened his eyes to the fact that there was someone in the world more important than himself. Her dainty figure and graceful movements, her musical laugh and never failing cheerfulness appealed with irresistible force to a man who was by nature gloomy and taciturn. It was not a case of love at first sight, but a fortnight's close association with the governess during meal times created in him a passionate love for her which was so strong that the laws of God and of man could not hold it in check.

On the surface, life at Shandy Hall moved with its usual smoothness and dullness, but underneath the first stages of the inevitable tragedy were preparing. Philip Cross worshipped in silence as long as he could control himself, but growing doubts of his chance of winning her, body and soul, impelled him to take action. It was a couple of days after Mrs. Cross had, with a laugh containing more acid than mirth, remarked that he stared too often at the governess, that he startled Effie Skinner by kissing her. They were in the hall at the time, and he had detained her for a moment by asking her a question about the children. Then, unable to resist the temptation of the lovely face raised towards his and the merry grey eyes dancing with a wonderful light, he impulsively pressed his lips against hers. She started as though he had struck her and went very pale, and he was waiting to hear his fate when she turned and ran up the stairs as though for her life.

He knew now that the crisis had come. If Effie

Skinner regarded that kiss as an insult she must tell his wife, and there would be a scene. Effie would, of course, leave immediately, and he would return to his dull existence. But if, by the time he sat down to dinner that night, his wife was in ignorance of the scene in the hall he would know that Effie Skinner was capable of responding to his advances.

It was not Philip Cross's habit to show the white feather, but when he entered the dining room a few hours after he had given the governess an inkling of his attitude towards her he was extremely nervous. He instantly became at his ease, however, the moment Mrs. Cross greeted him with a pleasant question concerning his walk, and when Miss Skinner appeared, seemingly self-controlled and contented, he experienced a thrill of triumph.

His satisfaction, however, was founded on mistaken inferences. Effie Skinner hated and despised him for insulting her, and she would have walked out of Shandy Hall within ten minutes of the incident, had it not been for her love of Mrs. Cross and the children. Even this would not have detained her had it not been that she could not yet regard the doctor in the light of a possible lover. He was more than forty years her senior, and his harsh and stern features made him look anything but the hero of a romance. She had, therefore, decided to try and forget the affair and say nothing of it to her employer.

Her decision seemed to be a very wise one, when a few days later the doctor, meeting her in the garden, apologised for and offered an explanation of his conduct. In words which were a cunning mixture of fatherly advice and subtle flattery he pleaded for her friendship, and the result was that Effie Skinner went back to the house deeply impressed by him. She had, however, no intention of permitting any familiarities or doing anything herself which would be disloyal to the woman who was her intimate friend as well as employer.

Effie Skinner was the last person in the world to care to come between husband and wife. Temperamentally she was incapable of man-hunting, but fate was to drag her down in spite of her efforts, and the influences which eventually brought about the great tragedy came from without and not from within.

The doctor had no intention of allowing his passion to cool or abating his efforts to bring about the state of affairs which would enable him to place the governess at the head of his household. As his love for her grew, his newly-born dislike for his wife increased in intensity, and when it became sheer hatred it drove him into the society of Effie. Shandy Hall was a roomy edifice, but when the hitherto lover of solitude remained indoors so that he might waylay the pretty governess it was not large enough to enable him to conceal his movements, and Mrs. Cross became suspicious and eventually guessed the truth.

Womanlike, her first resentment was against the girl she regarded as her rival, and it was easy enough for her to persuade herself that Effie Skinner was guilty of the grossest ingratitude. She blamed her husband, too, but in view of his well-known intolerance to her sex she decided that the first advances must have come from Effie.

One afternoon when Miss Skinner was out for a walk with the two eldest girls Mrs. Cross confronted her husband and accused him of flirting with their governess.

"It's no use lying to me, Philip," she said, in a cold fury, "I have the evidence of my own eyes. Miss Skinner must leave the house at once. I won't have her in the place another day."

He did not argue with her because it was necessary, if his plans were to be fulfilled, that Effie should depart as soon as possible.

"Very well," he said, with an affectation of carelessness which surprised the jealous woman, "I will give her your message."

His wife's willingness to allot to him the task of breaking the news to the governess that she was dismissed was exactly what the doctor wished. Ever since he had begun to get Effie Skinner into his toils he had been painfully aware of the fact that he could do nothing to weaken the girl's loyalty to Mrs. Cross. Now, however, she had herself provided him with the means he required to turn Effie against her, and, although his demeanour was solemn and apologetic when he interviewed her, his real feelings were those of joy and relief.

"I'm extremely sorry," he said, after he had paid her one or two compliments, "but my wife is stupidly jealous and she can't bear to see you in the house any longer."

"Does that mean I've got to go?" exclaimed the astounded girl, whose pallor was evidence of the blow he had dealt her.

"I'm afraid you could never be happy here now that Mrs. Cross has become suspicious," he said, gently, "but you and I will remain friends, Effie. Knowing as I do how absolutely innocent you are of offence I will stand by you and do all I can to make up for my wife's injustice. You shall not suffer for her jealousy, and it shall be my duty to protect you."

The tearful girl listened dully to him, and under the influence of his innuendoes against his wife her belief that Mrs. Cross was treating her very badly became a fixed idea. Gradually she came to the conclusion that she was a victim of her employer's unreasoning jealousy, and that the only real friend she had in the world was Dr. Cross.

When he saw that she was willing to believe him and to act on his advice he suggested she should go to Dublin and from there write to him regularly. To this she agreed, and when he added the request that they should conduct their correspondence under assumed names she scarcely hesitated. Then she went to her room to prepare for her departure.

The first stage of Dr. Cross's plans was now complete. He had got Effie Skinner out of the house, and he had implanted in her mind the conviction that his wife had done her an injury, and, in addition, he had foisted himself on her as her friend and benefactor. There were now only three more stages—the final subjection of Effie; the death of Mrs. Cross; and his marriage to the girl for whom he was willing to risk everything, including his honour and his life.

At the earliest opportunity the doctor visited Dublin where he met Effie by appointment. What means he used to persuade her to agree are not known, but during his sojourn in the Irish capital they stayed at the same hotel, and posed as husband and wife. Several visits ensued, and on each occasion their intimacy was renewed, but the doctor's passion for the beautiful girl was only increased by her pliability, and every time he returned to Shandy Hall his wife became more hateful to him. He knew that his squalid and vulgar intrigue would be discovered in course of time, and, like all doctors who have turned murderers, he was anxious to maintain his reputation for respectability.

A day or two after one of his visits to Dublin the inmates of Shandy Hall were alarmed by the sudden and serious illness of Mrs. Cross. She recovered to a certain extent, but just as she was expressing the hope that she would soon be quite well she had another attack and took to her bed. To her husband she complained of a terrible sensation of burning at the pit of her stomach, and her fits of vomiting were continuous. Cross should have called in another medical man, but he announced that he would look after her, and, although he constantly expressed his solicitude and anxiety, it was noticeable that his patient rapidly grew worse.

On May 24th, 1887, she appeared to be dying, and he sent for Dr. Godfrey, his own cousin, and requested him to give an opinion. He informed Dr. Godfrey that

Mrs. Cross was suffering from a slight attack of typhoid fever, and, as Cross was a skilled doctor and had been in charge of the case from the beginning, the younger medical man approved of the treatment and left the house. When Mr. and Mrs. Caulfield called they were told that their friend was no better, and when the Rev. Mr. Hayes arrived at Shandy Hall to see if he could help he heard that the sick woman was asleep and could not be disturbed. But the end was near at hand. The servants, haunted by the feeling that there was something unnatural in the pending tragedy, moved silently about the house like ghosts. On the night of June 1st they retired to their rooms heavy with apprehension, and early in the morning of June 2nd, one of them, Mary Buckley, started out of an uneasy slumber and, sick with terror, listened to the screams from her mistress's room. When the cries ceased she went off into a doze again, and when next she was conscious she became aware that the doctor was outside on the landing and that he was calling in a strong harsh tone, "Wake up, girls, your mistress has been gone since one o'clock." The servants scrambled out of their beds, and in a half-dressed condition rushed into the room where the body of the dead woman was lying. Near the bed stood the doctor, and they observed at once that he was more annoyed than distressed.

"Straighten the body out," he said, roughly. "The man will be here soon to measure her for her coffin."

Then he walked out of the room in such a manner as to give the servants the impression that his only object was to get out of sight of the body as quickly as possible.

To everybody's amazement the funeral took place on the morning of June 4th at the early hour of six o'clock, and when informed that people were talking of his queer haste in putting her underground, he answered that he did so in the interests of the neighbourhood, because she had died from typhoid fever. There were other and more serious mutterings, but, as he had

himself signed the death certificate and as it had been accepted by the authorities, there was no suggestion of an inquest as yet.

In common with Pritchard and Palmer, the murderer of Laura Cross kept a diary, in which he recorded his wife's death in these terms :

" Mary Laura Cross departed this life, 2nd. May she go to heaven is my prayer. Buried on 4th."

" 6th. For Laura's funeral, etc., five guineas."

Compare this with Pritchard's hypocritical record in his diary under the date of March 18th, 1865 :

" At one a.m. Mary Jane, my beloved, passed away."

Palmer, also a supreme hypocrite, poisoned his wife and wrote of her death in these terms : " September 29th, 1854, Friday—' My poor dear Annie expired at ten minutes past one ' "; and on October 8th added, " At church. Sacrament."

The hypocrisy of these three callous and brutal murderers is remarkable and suggests that the doctor who turns murderer practises self-deception more than any other criminal. Cross, however, confined his regrets to words and not deeds, and fifteen days subsequent to the passing of his wife he married Effie Skinner at St. James' Church, Piccadilly.

Conscious that his second marriage would arouse criticism he tried to keep it a secret, and, in consequence, his honeymoon was protracted, but as soon as he heard that it had become known in Dripsey he brought his bride to Shandy Hall and gave her the position which he had destined for her since that morning, a few months previously, he had kissed her unexpectedly. Dr. Cross must have been singularly optimistic if he really believed that the remarkable series of events at Shandy Hall since the arrival of Effie Skinner in the capacity of governess had passed unnoticed by the villagers. He must have been a fool as well as a criminal if he expected that the only sequel to his wife's sudden death and his second marriage would be undisturbed happiness for



himself and his bride. But there are no limits to self-deception, and Philip Cross lived in a fool's paradise until he heard that Inspector Tyacke, of the Royal Irish Constabulary, had drawn up a report concerning the first Mrs. Cross's demise, and had forwarded it to the coroner.

Unknown to the doctor, Dripsey had been teeming with suggestive and sinister gossip. It had been common knowledge in the neighbourhood that the doctor's unfortunate wife had been jealous of Miss Skinner, and it was pointed out by the discerning that only the doctor had administered the medicine to his ailing wife, that he had signed her death certificate and that he had buried her with a haste which was almost indecent. It was hardly necessary to quote his sudden re-marriage as additional proof that he had assisted nature to bring about Mrs. Cross's death. There were those who declared that the unhappy lady had been in the very best of health to within half an hour or so of her illness, and that her illness coincided with the return of her husband from Dublin, where, as was known now, he had been with Effie Skinner. But it was in reality his second marriage that damned him. The sudden and mysterious illness, the closely-guarded sickroom, the contradictory statements made by the doctor himself as to the nature of his wife's ill-health, the calmness he displayed when she was a corpse, the early morning funeral so that intimate friends and relations could not attend, and, finally, the trip to London to marry the girl who had been the cause of all the trouble at Shandy Hall, more than justified the request of several prominent inhabitants that the inspector should investigate.

When he became aware of the pending storm the doctor posed as an injured innocent, and he endeavoured to heighten the effect of the pose by ostensibly devoting himself to business. But the coroner had the body exhumed, and there was, of course, an inquest. Philip Cross attended it throughout, and was always the coolest

as well as the most conspicuous figure in court. When the inquest was adjourned, so that the experts could report as to whether there was poison or not in the portion of the remains submitted to them, Dr. Cross drove home and spent the rest of the day superintending the carting of some hay which had been cut in his paddocks. No one ventured to discuss the sensation with him because of his temper, but no one was surprised when, the day before the inquest was resumed, he was arrested. That this was justified was proved by the evidence of the doctors who swore that there was not the slightest indication of typhoid fever in the body, and that death had resulted from a dose of arsenic.

There was a long interval before the trial opened at the Munster Assizes at Cork on the 14th December, 1887, and one reason for the delay was an abortive attempt by the defence to have the trial transferred to Dublin, on the plea that the prisoner could not obtain a fair trial in the county where he was so unpopular. Four days were occupied in arriving at a verdict of guilty, and of all the counsel engaged only one survives in the person of Lord Atkinson, the famous Lord of Appeal.

Mr. Atkinson, as he then was, offered a brilliant resistance to the case presented on behalf of the Crown by the Attorney-General for Ireland. His chief contention was that a fully qualified doctor who had had experience of poisons in the East would not be such a fool as to use a poison which is about the easiest to recognise. But the prosecution made light of this and every other point advanced by counsel for the prisoner. Dr. Cross may have been an efficient army surgeon, but he was a very inefficient criminal. When it had been necessary for him to conceal his movements he had gone out of his way to advertise them. Even when he was meeting Effie Skinner in Dublin, and staying with her at hotels in the name of "Mr. and Mrs. Osborne" he had actually brought with him luggage marked with a capital P followed by a large white cross

(X), and, of course, every servant wanted to know what these hieroglyphics meant. That was the reason why the prosecution had not the slightest difficulty in proving at the trial months afterwards that the prisoner had committed himself with his wife's governess before the tragedy. The purchase of white arsenic by Cross was proved by a chemist whose evidence was not disputed, and there was no real attempt to rebut the statements of the medical witnesses. To complete and buttress the case against Philip Cross it was shown that before his arrest he had induced his sister to destroy certain medicine bottles, the nature of which had been indicated by his anxiety lest they should fall into unfriendly hands.

After his inevitable conviction the prisoner delivered a rambling address, in the course of which he tried to account for the arsenic in his wife's body and to convince a hostile court that he had been condemned unjustly, but it was evident from his faltering tone and manner that he did not believe himself what he was saying, and when his voice died away in an inaudible whisper it seemed to those present that the brain of the convict had proven unequal to the strain of inventing more lies.

Mr. Justice Murphy expressed his approval of the verdict, and he did not exaggerate when he described the crime of Philip Cross as one of the most cruel and cold-blooded of the century. In passing sentence of death he warned the convict not to expect mercy in this world.

He was executed on January 10th, 1888, and, as life had lost all its attractiveness because his second wife—exasperated and revolted by his terrible crime and the ruin he had brought upon her—refused to see him, he went to his death with fortitude, though the agonies he suffered in the condemned cell had turned his hair snow-white.

## CHAPTER X

WHEN the American criminal first invaded Europe in search of fresh worlds to conquer he brought with him a skill, originality, daring and resource which astonished his competitors. The latter were, for the most part, content to work for gains ridiculously disproportionate to the danger involved; their perverted cleverness was wasted because of lack of imagination, and the most successful crooks existed in a sort of sordid dinginess when in funds, and starved in a slum when penniless. The American, on the other hand, took himself as seriously as any captain of industry might. He dressed well, travelled in comfort, patronised the best hotels, and held his head high amongst honest men. There was nothing of the "hang-dog" expression about him; nor did he love darkness, and whenever he put himself within reach of the law he saw that he stood to gain a fortune by his daring. Adam Worth, for instance, did not consider anything under five thousand pounds sufficient to endanger his personal liberty for, and other leaders and capitalists of the American underworld were no less ambitious. Worth was, probably, the most remarkable American crook who ever "worked" Europe, but in many respects the late Max Shimburn had a more interesting personality.

Shimburn had earned the reputation of being the most successful of bank thieves before he invaded Europe. His courage was immense, his brain-power enormous. He controlled a turbulent gang with the same ease as he repressed himself, and, possessing a genius for organisation, he raided several American banks and

deprived them of close on a million of money. It is not, however, with his American career that I am dealing, and it will be necessary only to record that it was in order to avoid the attentions of Pinkerton, the famous detective, who had arrested him, but from whose clutches he had escaped, that Shinburn temporarily emigrated. He did not come to England, guessing that the first inquiries of the New York police would be directed to Scotland Yard, and it was in Belgium that he lived for a few months on the small sum he had been able to bring with him. He was, despite his lack of funds and consequent inability to do full justice to his peculiar abilities, charmed with Belgium, and he decided to make it his permanent home. Throughout his life Shinburn had been socially ambitious, and, had it been possible, he would have settled down in the States and become a leading local light. That being out of the question, however, he resolved to acquire a fortune at one stroke, return to Belgium, and become what is termed a respectable member of society. The crook had a prepossessing exterior, could converse intelligently on almost any topic, and was a master of three languages. He was deeply versed in the literature of his country, and even when his existence was a case of "here to-day, gone to-morrow," because of the attentions of the detectives, he was never without a book.

This was the man who returned under an alias to America and burgled the Ocean Bank of New York, with a net profit to himself of £50,000. Before the police had thought of him in connection with the crime he was on his way back to Belgium, and a few months later Max Shinburn was installed in a historic *château* within ten miles of Ostend, and by the aid of a Cabinet Minister, had acquired, at a price, the title of baron ! It was a startling transformation for the Yankee crook, who made a more or less ludicrous attempt to copy the manners of the old *noblesse*, and who, by means of lavish

entertaining, became very popular with a large crowd of notabilities, many of whom were bankers, the class which had been his special prey in the past.

Shinburn, undoubtedly, intended to "make good" in his new rôle, but the evil brain would not vegetate amidst respectability, and old ambitions were re-created by reports in the papers of sensational robberies within a hundred miles or so of his residence. Presently, former confederates sought an interview, and told a wonderful story of the huge profits to be made by investing a few hundred pounds in the robbery of the Belgian mail. The compatriots of the pseudo-baron had not come unprepared, for with characteristic American thoroughness they had already ascertained that on a particular date a large consignment of diamonds would be dispatched from New York to Russia via London, Ostend and Brussels. It did not trouble the gang that extra precautions would be taken to safeguard the treasure and that the mail-van would be locked and padlocked and well-guarded when not actually in motion. They knew that they could overcome all these difficulties provided they had sufficient capital to prepare for emergencies.

Shinburn's old enthusiasm for crime revived when he had heard them, and when they promised to submit to his direction and authority he agreed to supervise the campaign.

The sequel to this conference was that, on Saturday morning, November 27th, 1886, when the mail train stopped at Verviers, the officials were alarmed by the discovery that the official padlock, which had been attached to the mail-van at Ostend, was missing, and that it had been replaced by a substitute, obviously the work of thieves. The van was instantly entered, and a first glance proved that their fears were justified, for it was littered with torn letters and parcels. A hasty examination revealed the fact that all the diamonds from New York had been stolen; and later,

when the records could be consulted, it was found that an immense sum in cash, banknotes, and letters of credit had also vanished. All told, the thieves got away with more than fifty thousand pounds, and there was not a clue to their identity!

When the continental police had grudgingly admitted that they were helpless they appealed to Scotland Yard, and half a dozen shrewd officers were assigned the task of tracing the crooks. By dint of amazing patience and intelligent inquiry they were able to draw up a dossier of the *coup*, which fitted in with all the known facts. Undoubtedly, Shinburn's followers had assembled at Dover, and from there had gone to Ostend, where they had been joined by certain men engaged by them as supers. These latter had, on the arrival of the train, promptly entered the compartment next to the mail-van, and thus, by filling it, had ensured keeping it to themselves. During the journey it had been easy enough to climb on to the footboard, remove the official padlock, and enter the van, and with plenty of time at their disposal they had no difficulty in finding the mail-bags containing the diamonds.

It was owing to Shinburn's perfect organisation that the police, although they strongly suspected three Americans, could not arrest any of them. The authorities knew that it would be useless bringing the men to trial as it would be impossible to prove anything against them in view of their failure to produce the head of the gang. At this time Max Shinburn was not thought of in connection with the affair, and while the world was discussing the sensational train robbery he was living in genteel style in Ostend.

But his success was dearly bought, as the sequel proved. The crook was inspired by his success to live more extravagantly than ever, being convinced that a ready means of replenishing his exchequer lay always at hand, and, believing that his means were unlimited, he gambled away thousands of pounds, and awoke one

morning to find himself almost penniless. This meant an immediate return to crime, and, as his principal lieutenants were, by this time, back in America, he had to attempt a *coup* on his own account. The old skill and originality were there, but a few years of the life luxurious had not strengthened his nerve, and at the critical moment, in a Napoleonic raid on an Ostend bank, his courage evaporated, and he fled, leaving his burglar's outfit behind him. He got safely out of Belgium, and for a week or two concealed himself in London, before sailing for New York, but there Pinkerton's were on the look-out, and, suspecting that he would hang himself if only they gave him sufficient rope and scope, they waited until he could be caught in the act, and then pounced on him. The "Belgian baron" was subsequently convicted and sentenced for life.

Walter Sheridan was an intimate friend of Shinburn, and worked with him occasionally, but the two men were too masterful to be perfect associates, and it was only when in Europe that they combined forces. At home, in America, each was capable of earning a large income by devious methods, and, if Sheridan had not Shinburn's personality or education he never resorted to violence, and specialised, not in burglary, but in forgery. Sheridan talked bankers and merchants out of their money; Shinburn entered their offices at dead of night, and stole it. Yet Sheridan had no taste for the finer things of life, and his friend found him a dull companion in the palmy days when he was a Belgian nobleman. It was then that he persuaded Sheridan to take a house near Ostend, but the latter became homesick, and reappeared in New York to sell seventy thousand pounds' worth of forged railway stock, and when detected to scuttle back to Europe, carrying in his trunks imitation railway bonds of the face value of fifty thousand pounds. He got rid of these in London, Paris and Brussels, and he spent the proceeds in lavish entertainments, rivalling Shinburn, for



a time. Sheridan, however, never felt at home out of his own country, for he had never forgotten how near he had been sharing the fate of the Bidwell brothers who got life sentences at the Old Bailey for the famous £100,000 fraud on the Bank of England. It was Sheridan who invented that swindle, and he withdrew from the task of carrying it into effect simply because the Bidwells insisted on interpreting his instructions in a way that displeased him. "I'll have nothing to do with it," he said, sharply, "unless you obey me blindly. Your so-called improvements will lead to disaster." The Bidwells, however, held their ground, but, although favoured by fortune for a time, their plans miscarried, and—here they missed Sheridan's peculiar genius—they were not able to cover up their tracks, and, as a result, they were run to earth and severely punished.

Undeterred by the fate of the Bidwell brothers, Adam Worth descended on England with a retinue of rogues, and made history. A man of small stature—his intimates referred to him affectionately as "Little Adam"—this master-crook hired a furnished flat in Piccadilly, and from there directed operations against banks all over the world. He had in his service one Charles Becker, a German-American, who could imitate any handwriting without the slightest difficulty, and, besides the forger, he had trained burglars, who provided Scotland Yard with more problems in three years than it had previously tackled in ten. Worth's expenses in London were over two hundred pounds a week, but the treasury was always in funds, and, despite his unimpressive appearance, he was able to attract by sheer personality. His London name was "Harry Raymond," and at the flat in Piccadilly he gave dinners to men and women who never suspected the source of the wealth of the "American millionaire." There is a legend to the effect that at one of these parties a pompous Englishman, who boasted of a lengthy pedigree and purse, exasperated his host by slighting references

to the land of his birth. Adam kept his temper, but he avenged himself by sending one of his retained burglars to relieve the Englishman of all his cherished heirlooms. The story goes that the victim came to "Mr. Raymond" for advice, and that the crook actually accompanied him to Scotland Yard to give details of the outrage to the police !

But the earning of the income Adam Worth deemed essential to his needs as well as the large sums he had to pay his followers kept him very busy. Hundreds of pounds were of little use to a man who kept his own steam yacht at Cowes, and who thought nothing of gambling away a thousand pounds in the course of a few hours, but after one or two frauds on English banks he discovered that cheques for large sums were not paid on demand, as they were in America, and that the custom was to have the presenter of the cheque identified to the satisfaction of the cashier. This was the reason why Worth decided that the safest method of extracting money from the English banks was via the Continent, and with Charles Becker's assistance he prepared a large number of forged letters of credit purporting to be issued by Coutts's Bank. These letters were payable at banks in Belgium, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Smyrna and Constantinople, and when they were ready, Becker and three other members of the gang started on the "grand tour." They picked up a couple of thousand pounds in Belgium, passed on to France, and collected three thousand; relieved the Germans of the same amount, and hoodwinked the Austrians to the extent of seven thousand. From Vienna they went to Constantinople, and from there to Smyrna, where the greatest *coup* of all was to be attempted on the principal local bank. But Charles Becker and his companions had grown careless with repeated successes, and Chapman, who, next to Becker, was most trusted by Worth, entered the Smyrna bank in a semi-intoxicated condition, and when asked a

question by the cashier turned and fled. His conduct aroused suspicion, and the four men were promptly arrested; and, after conviction, conveyed to Constantinople, to be incarcerated in a foul jail.

Adam Worth had just returned from the opera at Covent Garden when he received news of the catastrophe, and, although he guessed that they had only themselves to blame for the disaster, he promptly made arrangements to secure their release. That was the reason why a society journal announced a few days later that "Mr. Harry Raymond, the well-known American millionaire, has departed for a cruise in his yacht *Shamrock*." As a matter of fact, Worth did not use his yacht, which would have proved too slow a vehicle for him. With five thousand pounds in his pockets, he went to Constantinople by the shortest route, and entered into negotiations with several of the officials of the prison. These gentlemen, not having seen their salaries for more years than they could remember, were only too anxious to "oblige the 'American millionaire,' " and the escape of the quartette of crooks was quickly arranged. When well bribed even a Turkish official can be thorough, and in this instance they did not fail Worth, for, although on the night which was to prove in a literal fashion that "stone walls do not a prison make or iron bars a cage," one of the prisoners was too ill to move, the Turks guaranteed that he would gain his freedom when it was convenient to himself! And they kept their promise, too!

His dealings with these gentry probably had some influence on Worth, when another of his followers, Thompson, had the misfortune to fall into the clutches of Scotland Yard in connection with a misplaced forgery. Thompson was offered bail, but could not get it because the bailees had to be English householders whose pasts would bear investigation by the police, and he was, accordingly, taken back to prison

to await his trial at the Old Bailey. Worth, through an agent, offered to deposit ten thousand pounds as bail, but not being an English householder the pseudonymous offer was rejected, and then the exasperated Yankee crook decided that the English Government would have to be blackmailed into a reasonable frame of mind. It seems too ridiculous, yet it is a fact that Adam Worth stole the famous picture, Gainsborough's "Duchess of Devonshire," from Messrs. Agnew's art gallery in Bond Street, not with the object of making money, but wholly and solely with the intention of using it as a lever to obtain Thompson's release ! He was under the impression that, rather than lose the masterpiece, the Home Secretary would set Thompson at liberty, when, of course, Worth would smuggle him out of the country.

All his trouble was, however, useless, for, owing to a flaw in the indictment, Thompson was discharged at the Old Bailey, and Worth was compelled to keep the painting until some twenty-five years later, when he restored it to Pinkerton's, who were acting for Agnew's, for a payment of two thousand pounds. That was long after Adam Worth, in the vigour of his manhood and intellect, had led the gang which robbed the Belgian mail train of forty-seven thousand pounds, and later defrauded a Paris bank of nineteen thousand pounds by forging the signature of one of its directors. That was a particularly daring exploit, for the director was living within a hundred yards of the bank, and Worth's agent had to pretend that he had come straight from the Frenchman's house !

Other big jobs this king of crooks brought off were two robberies of diamonds from a Bond Street jeweller's shop ; at least a score of long-firm frauds which were planned and carried out from Manchester ; and the obtaining of ten thousand pounds from a credulous Englishman, who was persuaded to pay that sum as a deposit on the purchase of shares in the Bank of

England! But as fast as the money came it went, and in one year as much as sixty-three thousand pounds was spent. Of this enormous sum, Worth was personally responsible for three-fourths, for the American crook had one weakness, gambling. His flat in Piccadilly was almost nightly the scene of a poker party, and, whenever he could, he attended English race meetings, betting in thousands and with a recklessness which threatened to make him dangerously prominent. But the very fact that he lived an open life and, apparently, feared no man, told in his favour, and thus, while Scotland Yard was daily receiving complaints of forgeries, burglaries and other swindles, and while they were being warned that a clever American was at the bottom of them, they never took the trouble to inquire the origin of the wealth which the sallow-faced little man with the small dark eyes and marvellous teeth spent so freely.

Yet, for all his successes and his amazing run of good fortune, Adam Worth ended in much the same manner as the brainless pickpocket and thief. In the days of his prosperity he had owned mansions in England and America, a steam yacht, racehorses, and—most important to him—the souls and allegiance of half a dozen men who had been content to treat him with almost Oriental deference and allow him to reap where they had sown. In the days of his misfortunes he was a lonely old man, who starved in a garret, although he owned—illegally, of course—Gainsborough's "Duchess of Devonshire." That painting had been valued at twenty-five thousand pounds, but its possessor could not convert it into twenty-five cents. to buy a meal to warm his famished body. He had more than once boasted that he had stolen half a million of money in Europe, but when he died he would have been buried in a pauper's grave if Messrs. Agnew had not made him a payment for his confession and his restitution of their property.

Another daring crook was George Engles, who refused an offer to work for Worth on salary and commission, and who, for several years, was quite a well-known figure in Continental circles. Engles was a clever actor and was Becker's only rival as a forger, having learnt the "business" from Wilkes, also an American, who proved his expertness by defrauding a score of European banks in the 'seventies and 'eighties. Engles was something of an artist, and had an inventive brain. He did not like presenting his own forgeries at bank counters, and, as a rule, when he set out on the European tour he took with him someone to perform that part of the fraud, but it often happened that his confederate was arrested, and, accordingly, pending the arrival of a substitute from the States, he had to face the bank officials himself. He was a great cosmopolitan, visiting England, Germany, Paris and Spain, in turn, and changing his name almost as frequently as he forged a cheque. Once he brought off a big *coup* by pretending to be deaf and dumb. He had been staying in a hotel in Madrid when he made the acquaintance of a wealthy Spaniard, who, he ascertained by chance, kept an account with a Paris bank. Engles, thereupon, stole a couple of cheques from the Spaniard's trunk, and forged one for fifteen hundred pounds. A few days later he entered the bank at Paris and presented it, and the cashier, having carefully scrutinised the signature and compared it with the original in his book, counted out the notes. He was making them up into a neat parcel to hand to the customer when, to Engles' horror, he began to speak to him in fluent Spanish, a language the forger spoke very badly, although, if the name of the person to whom the cheque was made payable was any criterion he must be a full-blooded Spaniard! The crook had only a moment in which to save himself, and he did not fail. Drawing a piece of paper to him, he picked up a pen, and scribbled a message in Spanish to the effect that

he was deaf and dumb. The cashier nodded sympathetically, and Engles passed out of the building with the money, and perspiring profusely.

But tricksters are frequently tricked themselves, and Engles was once cleverly defrauded. He was very fond of Paris, and, while temporarily residing there, he had an extensive flirtation with a waitress in a restaurant. She was a very pretty, quiet-mannered girl, and Engles was fascinated to such an extent that, when he passed a forged cheque on a London bank, and gained a thousand pounds by the transaction, he put the money in a sealed envelope, and asked Marie to take care of it for him, for he was afraid that, the numbers being known, they might be traced to him. Marie lived with her mother, who was the widow of a municipal employé, and Engles, certain that she would never be suspected, was content to live on the proceeds of other forgeries, and whenever he had a surplus add it to the money in the girl's keeping. In this way, Marie had over two thousand pounds belonging to him the night she accosted him in the street near her home with the startling news that two detectives had, that moment, called on her mother, and were cross-examining her as to her daughter's relations with the American gentleman.

"What shall I do?" cried the agitated girl. "They will search my room and I shall be ruined."

The crook felt that his own position was worse, for he was in danger of a life sentence, and he did a bit of quick thinking.

"Run home at once," he said, in a hurried whisper, "and remain in your room. If the detectives come upstairs burn the notes. Don't leave a trace of them. If they are suspicious, say you have burnt some love-letters you did not wish your mother to see."

With that he vanished, and it was a month before Marie saw him again. During the interval, however, she had written him a brief description of the destruc-

tion of his banknotes. "I was only just in time," wrote Marie, "and the detectives were angry with me when they saw the ashes. But you are safe, my friend, and I hope you will not put yourself in danger again."

Engles was soon compelled to return to New York, where he remained for nearly a year, but when he was in funds again he came back to Paris, and the first person he inquired about was Marie. To his amazement and anger he heard that, in his absence, she had married a young waiter, who had been employed in the same restaurant as herself, and that they had bought, for a large sum, a restaurant near the Gare du Nord, and were doing exceedingly well.

"We have not ceased to marvel where they obtained the money," said the American's informant. "The business must have cost them at least fifty thousand francs, but I suppose Marie had a rich friend."

The crook guessed at once how he had been outwitted, but, as Marie knew too much about him, he did not trouble to reveal his thoughts to her, though her lying story of a visit to her home by detectives rankled for a very long time.

Another crook who did well in Europe, only to come to grief in his own country, was Louis Brown, who was an ingenious swindler, and robbed banks, hotels and acquaintances with an impudence really amazing. It was Brown who invented the "diamond ring trick," and who successfully practised it in London and Paris, as well as in New York. Brown owned a diamond ring of peculiar shape and worth at least six hundred pounds, and the swindle consisted in depositing it with the manager of the hotel he happened to be staying at, as a security for a loan of five hundred pounds. Of course, before the money was advanced, the genuineness of the ring was tested by the nearest jeweller known to the manager. A few days later, Brown would redeem the ring, and about a fortnight afterwards admit to being hard-up again and ask for a second accommoda-



tion. Once again the ring would change hands, and repose in the hotel safe, but Brown never redeemed it a second time, because the lender held only an imitation of the original ring and the crook preferred to disappear with the cash. The ring was so unique and quaint that the manager never thought of having it tested a second time, and he could scarcely be blamed, seeing that the rogue tricked more than one astute pawnbroker by the same means.

## CHAPTER XI

ON Christmas Day, 1872, four Americans dined together in London to plan a fraudulent scheme, which resulted in the Bank of England losing more than £100,000, and it would have been poorer by several times that amount if Providence had not stepped in suddenly and discomfited the forgers, who had so completely hoodwinked the authorities that they were making money at the rate of ten thousand pounds a day.

The leader of the gang was George Bidwell, and associated with him were his brother, Austin, George Macdonald and Edwin Noyes, and all four of them were daring and clever criminals, who minimised risks by planning their campaign with amazing astuteness, and taking into consideration every possibility of an accident occurring. Armed with capital which they had obtained by fraud on the Continent, they were able to set about their preparations without having to rush things, and their first conference before opening their campaign took place in a fashionable hotel, where they had rented a suite of rooms.

Briefly, their plan was to forge bills of exchange, and get the Bank of England to discount them, that is, advance nearly their face value, the Bank receiving in return the full sum named in the documents when the bills fell due.

The first difficulty they had to overcome was the securing of an introduction to the greatest bank in the world. This is not an easy matter at the best of times, and, in the case of strangers who could give no references, it was, apparently, impossible, but the brainy crooks

were not to be discouraged, and eventually they solved the problem very neatly. Austin Bidwell, who was only twenty-five, was good looking and a bit of a dandy. He had an engaging manner, and there was nothing in his appearance or demeanour to suggest that he was other than respectable, and so when he entered the shop of Mr. Green, tailor, of Saville Row, and gave an extensive order for clothes, the merchant was delighted to have found a customer who promised to be a very remunerative one. Austin did not, of course, give his real name, and to Mr. Green he was Mr. Frederick Albert Warren, and during his first visit he talked so pleasantly and modestly that he quite won the heart of the elderly tradesman.

"Oh, by the way, Mr. Green," said Austin, with pretended carelessness, "I've got to see a relative in Ireland, and, as I don't want to carry my money about with me, I wish you'd take charge of it."

Mr. Green felt flattered by this display of confidence.

"I'm afraid I can't undertake the responsibility, Mr. Warren," he said, with a smile, "but if you like I'll introduce you to my bank manager, and you can open an account with him."

"It's very good of you," remarked the young American, gratefully, and a minute later he and the tailor were walking towards the western branch of the Bank of England.

Their business did not occupy long, for the manager was naturally pleased to have a customer introduced by such a respectable client as Mr. Green, of Saville Row, and when "Mr. Warren" deposited twelve hundred pounds in cash that was regarded as another proof of his bona-fides.

"By the way," said the American, as he and the tailor were preparing to leave, "I'm expecting another large sum to-morrow. May I deposit it here without troubling Mr. Green to come with me?"

"You're now a client of the bank," said the bank

manager promptly, "and you can deposit as much as you like." He grinned behind "Warren's" back at Mr. Green, who smiled in response. Both of them had been much amused by the simplicity of the young man. Three months afterwards they realised that "F. A. Warren" knew more about banking than they did themselves, and that the ordering of clothes, the story of the forthcoming visit to Ireland, and the casual introduction of the subject of money had been all done purposely because the gang of forgers wanted to get into the confidence of the Bank of England. Mr. Green, when he walked with "Mr Warren" to the Bank, would have been unable to believe it—had he been told then—that the Bidwell brothers had carefully made inquiries as to which Saville Row tailor kept an account at the Bank of England before they had chosen him.

Thus were the forgers able to begin their war against the Bank almost immediately, but, first of all, two genuine bills of exchange were paid in by Austin to Colonel Francis, the bank manager, for collection. They were for £500 each, and they were, of course, duly honoured. This manœuvre gave the colonel the necessary confidence in his new client. It made him realise that "Mr. Warren" was accustomed to dealing in bills of exchange, and when, a little later, one for more than £4,000 arrived, bearing the signature of a famous Continental firm, he did not hesitate to discount it, and the money was given to Austin Bidwell in notes, who promptly cashed them for gold, bought other notes elsewhere, and opened an account with them in the name of C. J. Horton, at the Continental Bank.

Henceforward the scheme worked smoothly. Austin kept a respectable sum at the Bank of England, but the money he received for the forged bills found its way to his "C. J. Horton" account at the Continental Bank by the route described. The idea was to prevent the notes given by Colonel Francis being traced to Horton.

Bills of exchange are more readily negotiated if they are not dated ahead for more than three months, and, consequently, the Bidwell gang forged three months bills only. Thus, it was obvious that, at the end of that time, the earliest would become due, and then the whole fraud would be discovered. They were, however, ready for that, for their intention was to slip quietly out of England in good time, using their real names, and as George Bidwell, the leader, kept in the background all the while with Macdonald, the actual forger, and Austin lay low, too, after opening the Bank of England account, they anticipated no trouble in evading justice, for they foresaw that Colonel Francis would never be able to identify "F. A. Warren" with Austin Bidwell. As for Edwin Noyes, who figured throughout as a clerk in the service of Austin, special precautions were taken in his case to protect him.

George Bidwell inserted an advertisement in a daily paper for a confidential clerk, and he mentioned in it that he would require a deposit of £300 as security. Now Noyes was staying in a small private hotel, and he had made himself agreeable to the landlord, to whom he had explained his wish to find a situation. Shortly after the appearance of the advertisement he read it to the landlord, and asked him if he thought it worth applying for. He was advised to put in an application, and, in due course, George Bidwell arrived at the hotel to interview him.

The conversation was overheard by the landlord, who was struck by the business-like attitude of the two men, who, of course, acted as though they were perfect strangers. After some discussion Noyes was accepted, and a solicitor was called in to draw up articles of agreement. This was only another "blind," for it was Bidwell who provided the three hundred pounds which Noyes solemnly handed over to him in the presence of the London lawyer. The object was to give everybody the impression that Noyes was

simply an employee, so that when the bubble burst he could not be charged with complicity in his so-called employer's frauds.

All these arrangements having been made, the four crooks began to forge bills of exchange. They were real works of art and quite perfect, and day after day the Bank of England paid out sums varying from four thousand to twenty-five thousand pounds. All through January and February the fraud continued, the four men living luxuriously, spending money recklessly, yet unable to get rid of a tithe of the fortune they were making so easily.

At times they were even embarrassed with the quantity they had, and the task of exchanging notes for gold and back again into paper was so arduous that it bored and even worried the crooks. They were all amazed, too, at the ease with which they outwitted the famous bank, so amazed that occasionally they wondered if it was quite genuine. The Bidwell brothers had their moments of anxiety, for it seemed to them that the shower of gold was too good to be true or likely to last. Yet days passed into weeks, and weeks into months, and the money continued to flow into their pockets.

But with the approach of March they had to think of flight, for on the twenty-fifth of that month the first bill would become due, and the firm whose signature it bore would instantly denounce it as a forgery. George Bidwell sent fifty thousand pounds in American bonds to New York addressed to "Major Matthews," another of his aliases, intending to follow after it, claim it, and live happily ever afterwards. There was plenty for his partners, and, indeed, their three months' secret war on the Bank of England had resulted in sufficient capital to make them all independent of work for the rest of their lives.

In the meantime, however, something had happened which was to affect the fortunes of all concerned.

It was to be expected that handsome Austin Bidwell, with the charming personality, would have his social successes, and his brother George ought not to have been astounded when he heard from him that he had fallen in love with an English girl.

"This is madness," George cried, as they faced one another in an hotel in the West End of London, "can't you understand how necessary it is for us to vanish without leaving any trace of ourselves behind? Don't you understand that when we leave England there must be no person likely to worry about any of us?"

Austin merely laughed at his dismay.

"She's to be trusted," he said, confidently, "and I mean to marry her. She's willing to come with me to America and live on the farm I intend to purchase. I've told her I'm independent, and she believes I'm all right."

"Look here, Austin," said George, in a desperate tone, "you've got to wait until the coming storm blows over before indulging in any love-making. Next Monday you must leave for America with the greater portion of the cash we have in hand. A little later I will depart, too, and then Macdonald will follow on. Each of us will remain in a different town until the police have abandoned their search for "F. A. Warren," and when that happens you can return to England and marry."

In the long run he succeeded in opening Austin's eyes to the danger, and the youngster agreed to postpone his marriage, but late on Sunday night he began to pine for his fiancée's society, and shortly before midnight he left his hotel and went to her house and had a chat with her. The result was that she agreed to travel with her mother to Havre the next morning, marry Austin Bidwell there, and accompany him to America, thus combining business with pleasure. The marriage took place unknown to George, but, as the latter had foretold, it had a great deal to do with the capture of Austin Bidwell.

With Austin on his way to America the remaining three men began to pack the day Macdonald was busy on the last two bills he intended to forge, for it had been agreed that when they had been negotiated the gang was to turn respectable, and henceforth become decent members of society. The bills were ready by mid-day, and Noyes, the so-called clerk, took them to the Bank of England, and duly returned with the cash and to report that all was well.

But he was wrong, for Macdonald had made a very trivial mistake, which was to prove a fatal one. In all probability the rogue's thoughts had been diverted from his special job by George Bidwell's chatter about their return home to ease and luxury. Despite uninterrupted success they had had an unnerving time in London, and they were anxious to quit the game, and the prospect of doing so must have been uppermost in Macdonald's mind as his chief sat smoking and "jawing" as the finishing touches were being put to the bills. Had it not been for this distraction he must have realised before parting with them that he had omitted the date, for that defect rendered the documents valueless.

The bank manager, however, had grown so accustomed to dealing with "Mr. Warren" that he, too, failed to notice the omission until the bills had been discounted, and when it was pointed out to him by the cashier he merely ordered a clerk to take them round to the office of the firm whose name they bore to have the date inserted. It was only five minutes' walk, and the clerk was soon there, but when the head of the firm saw the signature he immediately branded it as a forgery.

The consternation of Colonel Francis was complete, and he rushed off to the headquarters of the Bank of England to consult with the chief cashier. A hasty search was made amongst the cancelled banknotes, and it was ascertained that certain of them, known to



have been paid to "Mr. Warren," had passed through the account of a "Mr. Horton" at the Continental Bank.

The colonel and the other official called on the latter, and, by an extraordinary coincidence, they were consulting with the manager when Edwin Noyes came in, and was at once identified by the manager as "Mr. Horton's" clerk. Noyes was arrested at once, and as he was being shadowed by Bidwell and Macdonald to see if he transacted his business at the Continental Bank without an accident happening, they beheld him leave the building between two detectives. As they passed their "clerk" they glanced indifferently at him and his companions, but there was no recognition in Noyes's eyes as he stared before him.

Panic-stricken and terrified, the two forgers hastened to destroy all documents likely to incriminate them. They were aware that no one except themselves and Noyes knew that they had any connection with the gigantic fraud, and they hoped to get away safely, but again chance foiled them.

George Bidwell had practically destroyed every piece of paper when his confederate requested him to leave a small piece of blotting-paper, as he wished to scribble a note to a relation in America. The request was complied with, the message written, and the blotting-paper eventually thrown carelessly on the floor. Then the two men paid their bill and departed, greatly to the amazement of the landlady, who was still more or less stupefied when she read an account in her morning paper of the arrest of Edwin Noyes and the discovery of the gigantic fraud on the Bank of England.

"That's queer," she murmured, and wondered if the flight of her lodgers had any connection with the case, for the paper stated that the police were looking for Noyes's confederates. Suspicion and curiosity now animated the old lady, who went to the sitting room vacated the previous day, and with commendable

thoroughness collected the scraps of paper lying on the floor and in the grate. These she carefully preserved, and, having sent for a Scotland Yard detective, submitted them to him. He made a hasty examination, and when he discerned the name "A. Bidwell" on the piece of blotting-paper he uttered an exclamation of joy.

"That's bound to be the real name of the gang!" he cried, exultantly. "It's the name we've been trying to discover since we arrested Noyes. Now we ought to have no difficulty in getting the forgers, for we know who Warren is."

The two rogues were having breakfast at an hotel in St. Leonards when they read a description of themselves, together with their real names, in a newspaper.

"How did this come out?" George Bidwell asked, white to the lips.

"I don't know," exclaimed Macdonald, in terror, "but we must separate, George. I wish I was where Austin is."

"So do I," whispered Bidwell, anxiously. They shook hands, and the same day the leader commenced his famous flight. Two days later he was in Ireland, and there he heard that the cables were busy between England and Havana, where Austin Bidwell was on his honeymoon, and that the prominence this gave Austin had led to his arrest, for there had been no difficulty in identifying the "wealthy American who was travelling with his pretty English bride."

Thus the omission of the date from the forged bills and the tiny piece of blotting-paper had terminated the most astute and the cleverest fraud ever conceived by the mind of man.

George Bidwell was in Ireland only a week when he crossed to Scotland, and, in Edinburgh, he engaged rooms at 22, Cumberland Street, a house which was largely patronised by medical students. In the guise of a German of French descent and under the name of Herr Coutant, the leader of the gang spent ten days in the Scottish capital.

He was so anxious to read the latest news of the chase after himself that he inadvertently acquired the habit of calling every day at a newsagent's shop in Dundas Street, just as the London papers came in. Now customers who purchase ten journals a day were uncommon, and the newsagent took particular notice of his German patron. Herr Coutant spoke with a foreign accent and was to all intents and purposes a foreigner, yet that did not prevent the tradesman scrutinising him and deciding that he bore some resemblance to the description of George Bidwell. Shortly after coming to this decision another customer entered who was chief clerk to the Edinburgh agents of the Bank of England, and to this gentleman the newsagent broached the subject of his suspicions.

The information was immediately made use of by the clerk, who obtained the services of Detective M'Kelvie and a constable, and the three of them went to Cumberland Street, and waited until "Herr Coutant" appeared. His movements were those of a man who is in a highly nervous and suspicious state of mind, and when he went towards the letter-box at the end of the street, and they followed him, he kept glancing over his shoulder until guessing they were enemies, he suddenly took to flight.

M'Kelvie and the constable immediately started in pursuit, and "Herr Coutant" led them a merry dance. The fellow seemed to be extraordinarily agile. He scaled one after another a number of garden walls in Bellevue Crescent and Scotland Street, and when hard pressed by M'Kelvie he entered the back door of a house, ran along the passage, and made his exit into the area in Scotland Street. He then ran up the stairs, scaled the railings, and made off down the street, along Royal Crescent and up Duncan Street.

M'Kelvie still kept well up with him, but the constable had fallen considerably in the rear. The fugitive, however, was now beginning to show signs of distress,

and at last came to a standstill ; and, raising his stick, struck several times at the detective, who rushed on him and disarmed him without any difficulty.

The dramatic chase through the streets of Edinburgh ended in the capture of one of the greatest captains of crime the world has ever known.

George Bidwell was removed to London, and when Austin and Macdonald were brought back from America, the three of them and Noyes were placed on trial at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Archibald. There was, of course, no real defence. George Bidwell tried to shield his brother by taking all the blame, but the four scoundrels were found guilty and sentenced to penal servitude for life.

George was released at the end of fourteen years, and when he arrived in America he wrote his biography, and lectured on his experiences in England. But his pose of a reformed crook did not bring him any great amount of dollars, and when he died in the 'nineties of the last century there was not sufficient money to pay for his funeral.

## CHAPTER XII

**LITTLE** more than six years covered the career of **Henri de Tourville**, but never have six years been packed by one man with so much adventure and crime. In that short period he committed at least four murders, and his successful evasion of punishment bordered on the miraculous in view of the fact that he carried out several of his crimes clumsily and imperfectly.

It was a chance meeting with a wealthy Englishman that gave de Tourville the opportunity to put to practical account the evil which had been simmering in his brain for years. He was then a waiter in a Paris restaurant, and his humble circumstances compelled him to be known by his real name, **Henri Pineau**. Endowed by nature with a striking appearance, a good-humoured countenance and an easy, accommodating disposition, he had only to study his customers to win their patronage and friendship. In the uniform of his calling he looked handsome and distinguished, and foreign visitors, in particular, clamoured for his services, for **Henri Pineau** spoke English and German fluently and could make himself understood in three other languages. There was one regular diner who became anxious to monopolise the abilities of the remarkable waiter, who seemed to know the world so thoroughly in spite of his comparative youth. This gentleman was **Mr. William Cotton**, a traveller who had no permanent residence anywhere, and who had no friends or relations. When he offered the post of valet-secretary to the waiter the latter accepted with enthusiasm, and the same month **Mr. Cotton** and **Pineau** started on their travels. It was easy, of course, for the ex-waiter to discover that

if his employer suddenly vanished there was no one in the world sufficiently interested in him to go to the expense of an enquiry. It was this knowledge which inspired Pineau to take Mr. Cotton to Constantinople, and there suggest that they should explore some of the secret places of the Turkish capital. One night the two men left their hotel and neither of them returned. The Englishman was never seen or heard of again, and Henri Pineau, ex-waiter, also completely vanished. But the Count Henri de Tourville, who, the following year, appeared in Scarborough society and created a sensation by his lavish display, bore more than a striking resemblance to the man who had, six months previously, been the most popular waiter in that well-known Paris restaurant. De Tourville had plenty of money and jewellery, and had there been anyone sufficiently intimate with Mr. Cotton he would have been able to recognise the jewellery. The "count," however, knew that he was quite safe, and, as he was rapidly getting through the large sum of money which had come into his possession simultaneously with the vanishing of his late employer, he set himself the task of winning the hand of an English heiress.

With a knowledge of human nature out of all proportion to his obscure birth and indifferent education, de Tourville let it be known that he was so rich himself that he would prefer to marry a girl without a fortune of her own. As he was able to act the part of millionaire, he was never suspected of hypocrisy. He rented a suite of rooms in the most expensive hotel, and gave parties which were as artistic as they were exclusive, and the host, who had spent so many years studying the tastes and peculiarities of the cosmopolitan crowd which had patronised the Paris restaurant, knew how to practise the little arts which win popularity. He dressed in the height of fashion and with undoubted good taste, and his veneer of culture was quite

sufficient to deceive. Amongst his admirers was a widow of a Sunderland solicitor and her daughter. The latter was a delicate girl with romantic notions and, therefore, very impressionable. She was charmed by the courtly manners of the distinguished French nobleman, whose ancestors had fought at Cressy, and when de Tourville began to single her out for attention from amongst the crowd of dull women who passed their dull lives in Scarborough, it was with no difficulty she fell in love with him. As Edith Ramsden had no money of her own her friends considered her fortunate when the Frenchman proposed and her engagement to him was announced publicly. It was true that when her mother died she would be entitled to £30,000, but as Mrs. Ramsden was not yet fifty and in the best of health, it was unlikely that Edith would inherit the money for at least another quarter of a century. However, as Scarborough gossip credited the "count" with an income of many thousands a year, the financial side of the romance was scarcely discussed at all.

The marriage took place a few days after de Tourville had spent his last sovereign, and he was in a dangerous position because it was absolutely necessary that he should have a honeymoon in keeping with his self-conferred status. It would have been easy for him to have a honeymoon on credit at Scarborough, but that would be to imperil his position. He, therefore, forged a letter purporting to come from the head of a bank in Paris, and this he showed to Mrs. Ramsden when he asked her to advance him five hundred pounds. The document was on the face of it proof that her son-in-law had two million francs to his credit in Paris, and Mrs. Ramsden handed him the money and laughed in unison when he commented on the quaint position of a rich man who had to borrow.

The loan lasted just as long as the honeymoon, and then de Tourville and his wife—who had travelled as

count and countess, and had actually stopped at the hotel within a couple of hundred yards from the restaurant where he had been remarkable as waiter—returned to Scarborough, and the adventurer had, at once, to solve the problem of his financial relations with his mother-in-law. He had assumed the character of a wealthy nobleman, and to maintain it he must not create suspicion or distrust in the mind of his wife's mother. But he had not ten shillings in the world the morning he called on her at the house where she resided, ostensibly to settle his debts, but in reality to commit his second murder in less than a year. Half an hour after he had entered the drawing room he was heard to dash out of it frantically and shout for help. A couple of passers-by ran to his assistance, and, with the landlady and her two servants, listened to the Frenchman's almost incoherent account of how Mrs. Ramsden had been examining a pistol he had brought to show her at her request when she had accidentally shifted the trigger and shot herself.

There was, of course, a terrible commotion, but it was not noticed until afterwards that, as soon as he had told his story, de Tourville went to his hotel and brought back a doctor with whom he was on very friendly terms. The latter examined the body and certified that death had been caused by a bullet wound in the right eye while the lady had been looking down the barrel of the pistol. There was a coroner's enquiry, but the doctor's certificate was sufficient for the jury, and the papers published to all and sundry that the verdict was "accidental death."

Thus, at one stroke, the ex-waiter saved himself from exposure and acquired a fortune of thirty thousand pounds, but he was not to be permitted to enjoy his gains in peace, for Mrs. Ramsden had many friends in Scarborough, and they were not satisfied at all with the explanation of the tragedy given by the "count." They had not the slightest idea that he was



an impostor or that he was not exactly what he represented himself to be, but they wanted something more than a hurried enquiry and a youthful doctor's certificate, and, consequently, at the request of the widow's oldest friend, a Scarborough gentleman of great local influence wrote to Scotland Yard and asked the commissioner to send down an experienced detective to investigate the mystery of Mrs. Ramsden's death.

All adventurers must be lucky or they would not be able to adventure for long. It is certain that, had the commissioner selected any other detective than Chief-inspector Druscovich to proceed to Scarborough, Henri de Tourville would have been in gaol inside a month, charged with wilful murder. But Druscovich was the very man to suit the murderer, because, when he began his enquiry, he was thinking more of his debts than of getting at the truth. When he went to see de Tourville, and found that the only witness of Mrs. Ramsden's tragic end was anxious to ingratiate himself with him, he realised the importance of proving that he was ready to respond to the Frenchman's scarcely disguised efforts of friendship. There is no legal proof that de Tourville bribed Druscovich, but, in view of the revelations made during the trial of that once-famous Scotland Yard detective and three of his confederates for accepting bribes from the Benson gang, I do not think I do the memory of Druscovich an injustice when I express the opinion that he was in the secret service of the Frenchman during his sojourn at Scarborough. That is the only explanation of his return to London with a report that there were no grounds for taking action. The truth was that there were a score of reasons why the body of Mrs. Ramsden should have been exhumed, for her death was saturated with suspicion, and a third-rate detective would have accumulated sufficient evidence to warrant the assumption that de Tourville was her murderer. When, in the course of time, other misdeeds of the

rogue compelled the authorities to exhume the corpse of the widow it was ascertained that she had died as the result of the bullet wound inflicted on the back of her head, thus disproving her son-in-law's statement. How the young doctor could have been bluffed into certifying that the bullet had entered an eye is a puzzle best left to the imagination.

His hairbreadth escape from the hangman in no way influenced the adventurer's conduct. He wished to obtain the complete control of his wife's fortune, and also to remove her from his path. Had it been possible he would have murdered her at once, but his encounter with Druscovich had shaken him a little and he had to adopt subtler methods. He was not only tired of the unfortunate woman but he hated her, and when their only child was born he conceived a violent hatred for the baby, too. Had it not been that there was a wily lawyer in the background who would not allow the original capital to be touched, de Tourville would have planned an immediate death for his wife, but, unhappily for her, she was doomed to more than a year of systematic ill-treatment after her son's birth before she expired. By her death he expected to possess all her fortune, but the remainder was settled on her child, greatly to de Tourville's anger. The boy was a double encumbrance now, and he planned a crime similar in many respects to that which had caused Mrs. Ramsden's death, so that he might secure his own child's fortune and rid himself of all responsibility for the infant's welfare. Removing to a house which belonged to the boy, he furnished it cheaply and, having insured it for several thousands of pounds, he deliberately set it on fire late one night when the baby was asleep in the inner room at the very top. It was, subsequently, a subject of controversy that de Tourville should have insisted on the boy's sleeping apartment being the least inaccessible to the stairs and the doors leading out of the house. As it was, only a miracle saved the

youngster from disaster, a heroic fireman risking his life to convey him to safety. How clumsily the ex-waiter carried out his plans will be realised when it is recorded that it required only a superficial inspection by the representative of the insurance company to convince that official that it was a case of arson. On his advice the company declined to pay a shilling on the policy, and de Tourville was, thus, invited to try and recover by a lawsuit. The Frenchman, however, wisely declined to enter on a legal contest. He had more schemes to develop and mature, and, when his son went to relations of his wife, he shook the dust of the provinces off his feet and departed to London, where he began what he hoped would be a brilliant chapter in his career.

His first step was to become a naturalised British subject. His second was to qualify as a barrister. In the interval between these two events he made a niche for himself in London society by converting his large residence in the most fashionable part of Paddington into a meeting-place for men and women of more or less distinguished position and parentage. Wisely dropping the title of count, he relied solely for success on his personality, and more than one well-known novelist was glad to be his guest. Several Members of Parliament, among them men who eventually entered the Cabinet, considered themselves fortunate in securing the *entrée* to the fashionable and artistic salon over which the "French aristocrat" presided with so much grace and distinction, so impressed were they by this Mantilini of adventurers.

During this period of intensified activity, as fascinator of men and women, de Tourville's expenses could not have been less than two hundred pounds a week, and as he was often called upon to prove his claims to limitless wealth by meeting the requests of borrowers, it was a hard struggle for him to prevent the reputation he had manufactured being shattered. Financially,

things eventually came to such a pass that once more he had to go in search of a wealthy woman who would marry him and save him from ruin. And to de Tourville ruin meant a great deal more than loss of prestige and the derision of the crowd. He knew that if ever he fell from his pedestal that moment there would be started doubts and suspicions which would inevitably lead him back, not only to Scarborough and the restaurant in Paris, but also to that black night when he and Mr. Cotton had gone to explore the little-known quarters of Constantinople. He was, therefore, looking for something more than money when he planned yet another adventure into matrimony.

With incredible luck he found the very person he required half a dozen streets from his home. Mrs. Madeleine Miller was a middle-aged widow with a fortune of nearly £80,000, and it was so advantageously invested that it brought her in an income of £7,000 a year. But she lived so quietly and unostentatiously that, in comparison with de Tourville, she seemed to be a pauper, and when she was one of his guests and enjoyed with a score of others his lavish and artistic hospitality she had no reason to believe that her money could appeal to him. When, therefore, he surprised her one afternoon by asking her to marry him she was influenced by that vanity which animates us all to accept in good faith his assertion that it was herself only he loved. Some of her friends ridiculed the notion of the well-matured widow marrying for the second time, but Mrs. Miller regarded their criticisms as jealous outbursts, and duly went to the altar and became Mrs. Henri de Tourville.

They were married on the 11th November, 1875, and exactly eight months later they arrived at Innsbruck, the capital of the Austrian Tyrol. The landlord of their hotel noticed that the honeymooning couple were not on the very best of terms, but when they left for Spondining de Tourville was the most affectionate

of husbands, and his wife, apparently, superlatively happy. It was at Spondining that he completed his plans for his final murder, and it was from there they drove to the lonely spot thousands of feet above the sea level amid wild and picturesque scenery. There he stunned her with a blow on the back of the head, threw her over the precipice, and with Satanic cold-bloodedness climbed down the cliff to where the body lay so that he might add the necessary touches to complete his story of accident or suicide. Yet he told two stories when the Austrian police and his wife's solicitor in London wished to know the details of the tragedy of the Tyrol and what had happened to bring about the death of a healthy woman who had every inducement to remain alive.

Except for a different *locale* the murder of Mrs. Miller was a repetition of his tactics in disposing of Mrs. Ramsden. He was agitated, grief-stricken and melodramatic, and coincidence went further, for the Austrian authorities imitated the stupidity of the Scarborough dunderheads and hurriedly agreed that they were dealing with a case of accidental death, buried the body and exonerated the ex-waiter.

Delighted with the prospect of receiving the legacy of forty-five thousand pounds, which he knew his wife had left him—he had seen to it that she had made a will of which he could approve—de Tourville returned to London, and by a display of acting won the sympathy of Mrs. Miller's solicitor. That gentleman had drawn up her will for her and he informed the widower that, as soon as possible, he would place to his credit the amount to which he was entitled. De Tourville was on the brink of success now. He had feared that lack of means would compel him to disappear from London or resort to living from hand to mouth by means of dangerous exploits such as forgery and theft. Now, however, he would have sufficient to keep him going for years, and when funds were exhausted there would

be no reason why he should not repeat his Scarborough and Tyrol successes as a murderer of women.

But the rapid investigation by the district judge had not satisfied the few persons who had come into personal contact with Mrs. Miller, and they enlisted the expert aid of Inspector Hoffer, who, on his own initiative, spent some days examining the spot from which the lady had fallen and also the place where she had been found by the police. De Tourville's story had been to the effect that she had been killed instantly by the fall, and, as she had struck a level stretch of ground, the inspector wanted to know why it was that there was obvious proof that the body had been dragged at least twenty yards and that human hands had interfered with certain stones and shrubbery close to the body. Patiently and thoroughly he went from clue to clue, and his clever summary of what he had seen and discovered caused the Austrian authorities to issue a warrant for de Tourville's arrest and apply to the British Government for the extradition of the adventurer.

Montague Williams, the man to whom every murderer turned for assistance in those days, was enjoying an after-dinner cigar in his house in Brook Street when an agitated solicitor disturbed his privacy with the news that Henri de Tourville had been arrested by Scotland Yard and that he was to be brought up the following morning at Bow Street to be handed over to Austrian detectives unless he could show good reason why the magistrate should decline to extradite him. Williams was irritated by this invasion of his home, but the large fee tempted him, and with Mr. H. B. Poland, still living and a knight as well as a K.C., to assist him, he fought with commanding ability a losing battle against the representatives of Austria. His main contention was that England should not surrender one of her own subjects, who was, moreover, a barrister-at-law, to a foreign power for a crime committed beyond

the jurisdiction of Great Britain. But Mr. Vaughan, the magistrate, could see no reason why a British subject should have the right to murder at will outside British dominions, and he signed the order which sent to his doom the adventurer who had in six years murdered his way to fortune and affluence.

Many titled people in London society were more than relieved that de Tourville's trial took place in another country. Once he was extradited his whole past was revealed, and the exhumation of Mrs. Ramsden, which I have already mentioned, was the first of certain discoveries which proved that the ex-waiter had bluffed on a gigantic scale and that the man whom M.P.'s and peers and peeresses had been proud to shake by the hand was a professional murderer.

The result of the trial in Austria was a sentence of twenty years' imprisonment, a fate worse than death, because it meant that the convict would be a slave in the salt mines for the rest of his life. Had he been acquitted he would have been brought back to England and put on trial for the murder of Mrs. Ramsden, and it is probable that until he actually experienced what penal servitude in Austria meant he congratulated himself on his escape from the English executioner. But there are worse things than death, and Henri de Tourville, adventurer and murderer, endured eight years of indescribable misery before he died the death of a dog.

Strangely enough, as a convict, he was richer than ever he had been. The man whose daily diet was black bread, filthy soup and an undrinkable fluid ironically termed coffee, had a fortune of between forty and fifty thousand pounds lying to his credit in a London bank. This was the amount he had inherited under the will of Mrs. Miller, for, although he had murdered her, English law could not deprive him of his legacy. There was a paragraph to this effect in the *Times* immediately after de Tourville's conviction, and it was then said

that the sum must remain at interest until the convict returned and claimed it, when it would have to be handed over to him. Of course, he never actually received a penny of it, and when he died the amount was passed on to Mrs. Miller's next-of-kin.

In the list of great adventurers Henri de Tourville must for ever be prominent. Perhaps he was more fortunate than clever, but there never has been any rogue to rival his list of crimes if we take into consideration the fact that he had a run of only six years.



## CHAPTER XIII

JOHN MORGAN was a rogue with a perverted sense of humour and a "cheek" that was sublime, and because he possessed these doubtful qualities he was once the most popular man in England and caused more hearty laughter than all the professional comedians combined.

It was while he was engaged in prosaic and uncomfortable labour in Swansea Gaol that John Morgan, serving a sentence of twelve months for theft, thought out his great scheme. He was a young man with an engaging appearance, pleasant manners and a decided personality. His parents were respectable folk who had done their best to make their intelligent son keep to the straight and narrow path, but Morgan had no use for the virtues. He disliked work and he was fond of money, and so while he toiled amid the uncongenial atmosphere of the gaunt gaol he asked himself what chance there was for him when he returned to liberty and civilisation of making cash without having to work too hard for it.

He had, of course, been arrested by a detective dressed in plain clothes, and Morgan now recalled how the tap on the shoulder from that stern official and the mention of the word "warrant" had paralysed his thinking faculties and had turned him to stone. He had been so terrified by the suggestion that the law had captured him that he had not even troubled to ask to be shown the warrant for his arrest, and while in prison he had learnt that no British subject can be incarcerated without the warrant being read over to him.

All this suggested possibilities, and as the time for his release drew near he became very anxious to complete

his plans. He knew that on leaving he would be presented with the sum of ten shillings and his old suit of clothes, and with this capital he would be expected to try and earn an honest living amongst people who would refuse to touch him with a forty-foot pole the moment they knew that he had been in prison. It was a hopeless prospect, of course, but John Morgan, still quite unrepentant, had no intention of attempting to play the part of the sorrowful sinner who asks the world for mercy, and it was with a jaunty farewell to the prison officials and a swinging step that he passed through the gates into the sunshine of an April day. He was a free man again. Once more he was in a position to fashion his own conduct. He jingled the ten shillings in his pocket and strolled towards a restaurant. When he emerged his capital was reduced to six and sixpence. The balance had gone in providing him with his first square meal for twelve months.

But Swansea was of no use to him. He knew that the local police would be informed by the prison governor that a dangerous thief had been let loose on society again, and every "copper" would be warned to keep an eye on him. John Morgan, therefore, made haste to leave the town which was already too full of unpleasant memories to make him feel at home there. But he felt that he first must augment his financial resources, and in order to do this he resolved to give his great scheme a trial run.

Walking briskly down an unlovely street lined by dismal houses and bedraggled women he inspected each one closely, passing all until he came to the corner where a cottage, clean and tidy, attracted him. He had seen it once before and he remembered the name of its tenants.

Without hesitating, he knocked at the door and was admitted by a frail little woman with an anxious expression. Morgan knew that her husband was a commercial traveller, fond of racing, and that he had once had a

narrow escape from a conviction at the local police court, the charge having been embezzlement of his employer's money.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Green," he said, with what he thought, the non-committal manner of the professional detective. The woman, pale to the lips, stammered a scarcely audible answer, for the stranger's stern gaze terrified her. It conjured up visions of her husband in gaol, for she was only too conscious of his madness for betting beyond his means.

"I am sorry to say I have bad news, Mrs. Green," said the impostor, producing a notebook and pretending to read from it. "Your husband's name is Thomas Green, isn't it, and he is employed by Sawyer and Co.?" He ran through a string of more or less inaccurate details, but Mrs. Green was too frightened to be able to control her thoughts. "Thomas Green is charged with embezzlement," he went on; "he has been frequenting racecourses lately. I have a warrant for his arrest. Will you please tell him I am here?"

The woman grasped the top of a chair to steady herself.

"He—he is a g—g—good—good husband," she stammered. "Oh, sir, if you could give him a chance. I'm sure it's a mistake. Tom's the best of husbands and fathers. If only I—I—"

Morgan pretended to be touched.

"I have to do my duty," he said, in a less aggressive tone, "but I must admit I'm sorry for you. It's rough on the women. That's the worst of being a detective. I wish I could help you. Of course, if I had a few pounds I might be able to arrange for the warrant to be kept back for a month. That would give your husband time to square his accounts."

Mrs. Green jumped at the "straw."

"I have only two or three pounds in the house," she said, almost hysterical with relief, "but I could borrow some more. My husband is at Cardiff. Would

five pounds be of use ? ” Morgan pretended to be immersed in thought. Then he looked up suddenly with a gracious expression.

“ I’ll do my best with it,” he said, kindly. “ But hurry up. I don’t want the chief to send another man to find out why I am so long.”

With the aid of the pawnbroker Mrs. Green was able to hand the impostor five golden sovereigns, and with her heartfelt gratitude ringing in his ears he left the house and went to the railway station. An hour later he was on his way to Shrewsbury, and his fellow-passengers were astonished to hear him burst into laughter at frequent intervals. They did not know that the heartless scoundrel was recalling with glee the little tragi-comedy in which he and poor Mrs. Green had just taken part.

The success of that fraud had determined him to repeat it, but on a far larger scale. He knew that he had only to whisper that he was a detective and everybody would be astonished into a sort of paralytic inability to think or act. Of course, if anyone demanded to see his credentials he would be in a fix, but he guessed that that was unlikely. Detectives make such rare appearances in the lives of average people that nobody quite knows how to take them. I suppose we all have skeletons in our cupboards and that the mention of Scotland Yard produces an unpleasant thrill even in those whose records are blameless.

I think it is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who tells how once he sent a telegram to each of twelve friends, all men of great virtue and reputation, and of considerable position in society. The message was worded, “ Fly at once. All is discovered.” Within twenty-four hours, the story runs, all twelve were in Holland !

But to return to John Morgan. He was a sly, clever rascal, and if he was careless of the future he was cute enough to take every precaution to see that his next exploit was not spoilt by a false step.

The best hotel in those days was the "Raven," and there the leading townspeople and prosperous visitors were to be found at the ordinary. Next morning Morgan quietly sauntered in, ordered a drink, and presently engaged the waiters in conversation, impressing the staff by his suggestion of mystery and the depth and power of his voice. He would have made a fine character actor had his lot been cast in other places.

One waiter in particular was deeply smitten by the stranger, and being a reader of romantic novels he flattered himself at once that he had discovered the real occupation of the man who asked such shrewd questions. He was a detective, of course, and when the waiter had made up his mind about that he became the humble servant of the visitor.

Morgan accepted all this deference with a dignity that was superb. But, despite his rigid calm, his brain was a seething-pot, for he knew that the next couple of hours would mar or make him, and he had had enough of prison-life to last him for a decade.

The dining room was crowded when the clock struck two, but then a move was made towards the door; a few merchants and their friends remained to chat. Morgan turned to his admiring waiter.

"When do the magistrates sit?" he asked, in a tone of voice that, as the waiter reported afterwards, sent him "a-shiverin' from 'ead to foot."

"They begin at half past two, sir," said the servitor, humbly. "Them 'gents' as you saw go out first are the magistrates. They be goin' to the courthouse."

The impostor smiled knowingly and tapped his pocketful of papers. A sensational rumour spread itself amongst the staff that the papers were warrants, and all were curious to know who were to be included in the detective's haul. At half past two exactly, Morgan, now fully refreshed and feeling confident of success, walked into the dining room, and went up to a well-dressed gentleman who was seated at a table

with a friend. Pausing for a moment, he tapped him on the arm. The merchant started and stared at him with a frown.

"Can I see you alone?" asked Morgan, sternly, conscious of the fact that four waiters, three chambermaids and the proprietor were hovering outside the door and straining every nerve to hear every word.

"No, you can't," was the snappy answer, "say what you have to say before my friend. I don't know you, my good fellow."

"Very well," said Morgan, with imperturbable dignity. "It is my duty to inform you that I am a detective officer from Cardiff and that I hold a warrant for your arrest on a charge of fraud. It is also my duty to warn you that anything you say will be taken down in writing and used as evidence against you at your trial."

The merchant sprang to his feet to protest against the outrage, but Morgan noticed at once the fear in his eyes, and his confidence increased tenfold.

"I am the son of a well-known Manchester merchant," he cried, striving to make his anger overcome his terror. "This is a scandalous outrage and——"

"Your name is Ashworth and you are wanted by the Cardiff police," said the impostor, inexorably. "I must do my duty, and I advise you to offer no resistance to the law."

By now the landlord was in the room and Mr. Ashworth was volubly calling upon him to save him from this insult. But Mr. Landlord was an old and experienced man, and he had often been tricked by apparent gentlemen in the past. Why, not more than two years previously, one of his guests, who had obtained large credit by posing as a lord, had been captured by a Scotland Yard detective just when everybody had decided that he was a real true-blue nobleman to the life.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Ashworth," he said, apologetically,

"but I can't go against the law. You'd better accompany the gentleman and not make a fuss. The magistrates are sitting now and you can explain to them."

But Mr. Ashworth had no desire to be hauled in this ignominious fashion through the streets. He was not conscious that he had committed any offence against the law. But the brutal truth was that he was held by a detective, and it so amazed him that he never thought of asking to see the warrant.

"Come along, my man," said Morgan, sternly, when the crowd in the room had unanimously refused to guarantee Mr. Ashworth's honesty. "I've wasted too much time as it is. You've got to go through it."

The only cool and level-headed person was the impostor, and by sheer force of personality he dominated the situation. It was impossible to guess that two nights previously he had slept in a prison cell. From first to last he had the situation well in hand. He was the very majesty of the law, strong, incorruptible and stern.

Ashworth begged to be allowed to make the journey to the station in a cab. Morgan curtly declined to pamper him.

"You've given me too much trouble already," he said, sharply, "in all my experience as a detective I've never met with such a worrying prisoner. You ought to think of these things before you commit your frauds."

There was a hushed murmur of admiration for his sternness. Ashworth looked round and read condemnation in every eye. Then he turned to the impostor and declared he was ready.

"I'll not put the bracelets on," said Morgan, relenting, "unless you try to break away. Come along." It was a generous concession, or, at least, so it struck the awe-stricken audience. They did not know that the impostor had no handcuffs, for that was his reason for his unexpected generosity.

With a firm grip on his prisoner's coat-sleeve Morgan lead the way to the police station, and by the time it

was reached the small crowd which had accompanied him from the hotel had swollen. Then the mob stood patiently to wait for developments.

Morgan, ex-convict, impostor and swindler, was now in the presence of the inspector. He was, so to speak, in the lion's den. If it happened that the officer was a martinet, a stickler for discipline and jealous of his rights he might lay bare the whole imposture by a few questions. But Morgan's luck was in. The inspector had risen from the ranks and still had the mind and ability of an ordinary policeman, and when the rogue introduced himself as a leading Cardiff detective he was accepted at once at his face value. The inspector instantly placed himself at the "famous detective's" disposal.

In record time Morgan detailed the charge against Ashworth and requested to be given the facilities to bring his prisoner before the magistrates then sitting. He explained that he wanted to catch a particular train back to Cardiff, where the authorities were impatiently waiting to see Ashworth, a notorious swindler who had plundered scores of merchants and shopkeepers. With much eloquence the bogus detective enlarged upon the accused's crimes, and he worked upon the feelings of the police to such an extent that even they did not ask for a glimpse of the warrant or even suspect for a fraction of a moment that he was not what he claimed to be.

It was a short step from the station to the police court, where, by now, a large audience had assembled to wait for the arrival of the desperate character. The magistrates, too, had had whispered consultations with their clerk, who had told them that a certain notorious adventurer had been laid by the heels and that presently they would be called upon to commit to the police at Cardiff a person whose frauds were rumoured to have been in the neighbourhood of a hundred thousand pounds.



When, therefore, Morgan made his way into court with Ashworth, he was already half a hero in the eyes of the Bench. The presiding magistrate treated him with a deference that must have tickled the rogue immensely. When he went into the box to give evidence against the accused all eyes turned from the prisoner to him and not a word was missed of his fluent description of the enormous frauds committed by the man in the dock.

Ashworth again and again protested his innocence and swore for the hundredth time that he was the son of a Manchester merchant of position and standing. Morgan's expressive grin when the magistrates glanced at him during the prisoner's outburst was eloquent of much, and they were unanimous in deciding that the accused must be remanded to the next day, when they would complete the formalities for handing him over to the "astute young officer" who had been sent to convey him to the scene of his crimes.

The "sleuth" offered no objection, although he casually mentioned later that he would have been better pleased had he been allowed to take his man away by the next train. However, he was too good an officer to dispute the decision of his superiors, and he declared that he would turn the delay to advantage by strengthening his case against Ashworth.

He asked that the prisoner's keys should be handed over to him. When this was done he called for a constable to help him to search Ashworth's trunk at the hotel. Of course, he had no difficulty in finding one, and, in due course, impostor and policeman set out for the room the "criminal" had booked at the "Raven."

The "detective" was most methodical in his methods, and the constable in attendance was lost in admiration. When Morgan found a gold watch and chain he uttered an exclamation of relief. "Part of one of his little frauds," he said, aloud, and chuckled as he placed it in his pocket.

He found fourteen pounds in gold and six pounds ten in silver together with a variety of small, very pawnable articles. All these he confiscated, after having pointed out to the policeman how useful they would be in proving the accused's guilt.

I knew he was fond of jewellery," said Morgan, impressively; "these things will enable me to trace him to various shops. Then I'll bring forward the tradesmen to identify him, and it'll be as easy as winking to secure his conviction."

The "copper" acknowledged his colleague's genius. For over an hour he had been watching the "great detective" and all that time he had been studying his methods, for even a provincial policeman may have ambitions, and the yokel fancied that the Cardiff "tec" was one of the leaders of his profession. How Morgan must have grinned! Forty-eight hours earlier he had been a convict, and now all the forces of the law were engaged in helping him to perpetrate an insolent imposture.

"That'll do," said Morgan, at last, realising that he had safely stowed about his person all the valuables that were the property of his unfortunate victim. "You can return to the station. I will follow later. Don't talk too much, my friend. I have other warrants to execute, and I think Shrewsbury is going to have even a greater surprise."

He was right when he said that. Shrewsbury was, indeed, going to get a shock and, incidentally, to find itself the most talked about town in the United Kingdom, for, when the following morning, Ashworth was brought before the Bench again, there was no sign of the "detective," while the receipt of a telegram from Manchester established beyond doubt the innocence of the accused. A few more enquiries revealed the fact that Shrewsbury had been cleverly hoaxed by an unscrupulous adventurer.

Morgan had decamped with the spoils, leaving the

police to realise how they had been fooled. When the story got into the papers Morgan became the hero of the hour. Lengthy accounts of his exploits were printed. All the details of his previous convictions were revealed to a public that could not read too much about the impostor who had posed as a detective and had tricked a whole town.

The police, of course, were hot on his trail at once, but they did not see him again for over two years. Morgan went into hiding in the East End of London, and it was for quite another offence that he was, subsequently, arrested and sentenced.

But England's Capt. Koepenik—as he may be termed—had the satisfaction of knowing that for his Shrewsbury exploit he had earned a place amongst the most remarkable impostors of the century. That he regarded the position as a distinguished one he himself admitted when ten years later he was found earning a precarious livelihood as a hawker in Whitechapel.

## CHAPTER XIV

I HAVE seen many adventurers in the dock at the Old Bailey, but my recollections of Franz von Veltheim are the most vivid and clear cut because he was the only man I have ever seen who looked the part he had chosen to play on the world's stage. Six feet three in height, with broad shoulders and a massive frame well proportioned to his stature, strong, mobile features, hard gray eyes and firm mouth, he carried himself with a princely air and was when silent and passive the most complete evidence in favour of his defence. He might have stepped out of the pages of a sixteenth century romance, and it required no strain on the imagination to picture him in brocade and ruffles fighting for the mere sake of combat and helping to make and unmake kingdoms. At the other end of the court sat Mr. Justice Phillimore, gorgeous in the scarlet of his high office, stern and pale-faced, the very embodiment of austere decorum. Never were two greater contrasts in opposition. The judge, typical of the conventional county family ; a man whose life had been sheltered from the day he had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth ; well known for his horror of those laws which help to loosen the bonds of matrimony ; in brief, a man who knew nothing of the world which lies beyond the public school, university and Society. The prisoner, bigamist, thief, blackmailer, expert liar and blackguard, but handsome, debonair and happy-go-lucky, and ever able to sway the mind of practically every woman with whom he came in contact.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate for von Veltheim that he was tried by Lord Phillimore, but on the other hand,

before his catastrophe at the Old Bailey, he had enjoyed an amazing run of luck, including acquittal after a nine days' trial for murder. When everything is considered he never performed a more stupendous feat when he persuaded the Johannesburg jury that he shot Mr. Woolf Joel in self-defence. That was an exceedingly narrow escape, but he profited little by it, because it would seem that the cleverest adventurer sooner or later destroys himself by his own folly.

There are women living to-day who persist in believing von Veltheim's own story of his life. These are women who once loved him and who, although they were cruelly deceived and robbed by him, retain memories of his fascinating personality and wish to find excuses for their own credulity by endowing him with the qualities of a super-man. He claimed to have been for thirty years a sort of Colossus bestriding the world, and a favourite pose of his was that of champion of weak states and forlorn hopes, but the truth is that he was an exceptionally mean scoundrel to whom society was too lenient.

Like all super-rogues, von Veltheim began in a small way. Born in Brunswick in 1857 he was, long before he left his teens, well known as a thief. He belonged to a low class German family which bore the undistinguished name of Kurt, and it was as Karl Kurt that the future blackmailer operated until a trivial incident inspired him to change his name. It was in 1880 that he found himself a sailor in the German Navy after a short experience on board small English merchant ships. He was then twenty-three and he had seen the inside of prisons in his native land and in Great Britain, but his real career began when he stole a gold watch belonging to his captain and promptly deserted. When he reached safety in London he took the watch to a pawnbroker whom he assured that the property was his own. "I am Franz von Veltheim," he said, knowing full well that physically,

at any rate, he did justice to the name engraved under the coat of arms on the back of the watch. And Franz von Veltheim he remained to the day of his death, and years before that event occurred he had grown so used to it that he believed it was his legal name.

Prudence rendered it necessary that the adventurer should leave Europe for a year or so, and, consequently, he went to Australia, where he married a girl of good family who took him at his own valuation, which was that of son of a baron and heir to vast estates. From Australia he went to South Africa, leaving his wife to travel alone to England, where he joined her as soon as he discovered that for the time being Capetown promised no profits. It happened that during her voyage Mrs. von Veltheim—for the sake of clarity I will give the rogue the name by which he is best known—made the acquaintance of an English general who was kind to her when he noticed how lonely she was. As soon as von Veltheim heard of this he attempted to blackmail the Englishman to the extent of two thousand pounds, but he did not receive a penny. The incident, however, opened up to him a method for raising the wind which he practised on many occasions successfully. But I will not enter into his exploitation of women and their weaknesses. How many times he married it is impossible to say, but in each case the sordid story is the same, the trusting women bitterly disillusioned and paying heavily for their folly. One of his victims committed suicide, and none of them prosecuted him, for he chose them with care, always allying himself with families he knew dare not create a scandal.

It is as an international adventurer that I will depict Franz von Veltheim. He was the perfect liar with a nerve which was proof against all the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. No other man could have obtained the appointment of United States Consul at Santa Marta ; no one else could have, unaided, wormed

his way into the best society of two continents. Had he been able to keep his hands off his employer's money he might have remained consul for years, but he burst the bubble of his own reputation and fled to London, and there he married again and vanished, and the police of half a dozen countries were looking for him when he enlisted in the Cape Police. Finding Europe and America too suspicious of his doings he decided to make his fortune in South Africa, and it was only because he was faced by the prospect of starvation that he became a policeman. He had not been in the service of the law for more than a few months when his legal wife, whom he had deserted in London, identified the body of a man taken out of the Thames as that of her husband. She was so positive about it that the newspapers printed the news of von Veltheim's death as a fact, and it was generally believed that one of the most dangerous enemies of society had committed suicide. When, however, the publicity given to the affair reached South Africa von Veltheim's superior drew his attention to the story of his career as given by his wife and, although he was ready with several well-polished lies, he was bundled out of the Cape Police and let loose on the community again.

And now came the really big adventure of his life. To his colleagues in the Cape Police he had related stories of wonderful adventures in deserts in Australia and how he had found huge deposits of gold in places where no other white man had dared to appear. He accounted for his inability to exploit his marvellous discoveries of rich ore by stating that they were so inaccessible that it would not pay to work them. A specimen may be given of his powers of invention. Speaking of the years which Scotland Yard declared were passed in an orgy of bigamy and blackmail he said :

"In 1883 I made a long trip, trying to join the Chinese in their fight against France, but arrived too

late, for the French force had sunk the Chinese navy at Fu-chow. During 1883-1884 I travelled to China, Japan and Java, merely as an adventurer, and eventually found myself in England again, whence I returned to my native country, always travelling under the name of von Veltheim. After spending a few weeks with my relatives I became restless again, and started off in quest of new adventures. After travelling through Italy, I made my way down to the Mediterranean and crossed over to Algeria. On one occasion, having ventured into a wild and desolate district of the interior, I narrowly escaped capture by brigands, and for two days and nights was lost in the hill country, and only reached friendly shelter again with the greatest difficulty in a famished and very exhausted condition. Algeria, although it was possible to obtain plenty of excitement there, did not offer a prospect of making much money, and as I was running short of funds I decided to return to Europe.

"I made the acquaintance of a neighbour and cousin of mine who was the Master of the Household of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria, who gave me an invitation to come out there. While there in the autumn of 1885, Roumania declared war on Bulgaria. The Emperor of Russia recalled his officers in the Bulgarian Army, which left them practically without any superior officers. At the time there were some nine or ten visitors—Germans, Austrians and English—who were on leave or who had been officers, who promptly offered their services to Prince Alexander.

"I became a personal friend of Prince Alexander—a most charming man and brave soldier, and was attached as a volunteer to his staff. My longing for active service in the battlefield was fully gratified, and I was in the thick of the fighting at Tirnova on November 24th, when I was slightly wounded, and at Pierrot five days later, when I received a much more serious wound, and, much to my disgust, had to be



invalided to Bucharest. By the time I had sufficiently recovered to take part in active service again the war was over, so it was necessary to look for a new field of adventure."

All lies, and stupid lies at that, but no matter how often he contradicted himself there were plenty of credulous fools to believe him.

What we do know is that in 1898 he was doing his utmost to turn to his personal advantage the chaotic state of affairs in the then South African republic.

There is no doubt that his willingness to sell himself to the highest bidder earned for him the personal acquaintance of Woolf Joel, who was leading the group of South African millionaires opposed to the policy of Paul Kruger. It is fairly certain that Joel would not have had anything to do with the German crook if he had not considered that the dirty work he wished to be done must be done with dirty tools. But the diamond merchant blundered badly psychologically when he selected von Veltheim. The two men often met in secret, but their relations became known in Johannesburg, and no surprise was expressed when Woolf Joel quarrelled with the crook and declined to see him again.

It was almost immediately afterwards that the tragedy took place. Von Veltheim was unwilling to surrender his grip on a multi-millionaire, and he declined to terminate an acquaintance which had once promised to make him rich beyond the dreams of avarice. There was a scene in the office of the Joels at Johannesburg, and Woolf was shot dead. At the subsequent trial the prosecution called for conviction and death on the ground that the crime was a cold blooded one founded on the refusal of the victim to pay blackmail, but von Veltheim's wonderful personality and plausible tongue carried the day, and the cheering mob endorsed the verdict of the jury that he had killed in self-defence. It was well for

him that he was tried at a time when political passions were running high in a country where men were as primitive as their laws. But the hero of the crowd was, with illogical haste, deported the next day on the ground that he was a danger to the community. A few months later the handsome adventurer who had for years lived in an extravagant style on the proceeds of his swindles was arrested at Delagoa Bay as a vagrant, and, although a German, he was deported to England, for England always appears to have been the dumping ground of criminals of every nationality. However, von Veltheim had too many wives and victims in England to make that land enticing to him, and so he vanished from the ship at Capetown and returned to the Transvaal. Here he had another astonishing adventure. Put in prison for his violation of the expulsion order he was rescued from there by the victorious British troops, who, apparently, treated him as a political offender. They were ordered to give liberty to anyone imprisoned under the Kruger régime, but, as usual, von Veltheim did his best to make money out of his luck. It was a favourite ruse of his to pose as a secret service agent—amongst other things it provided him with a reason for declining to answer any questions about his whereabouts during the awkward past—and now he went to Colonel Maxse and related a long-winded story, packed with circumstantial details, to the effect that he had at his finger ends all the secrets of Paul Kruger's Government, and that if he were guaranteed twenty thousand pounds he would kidnap the old president and hand him over to the English. Of course, had his offer been accepted, von Veltheim would have asked for a thousand on account, but Colonel Maxse treated the offer as a joke and declined it.

Two years later he turned up at Trieste in Austria, where he sought refuge from the activities of the London police. South Africa, for the time being, was

unsafe, and Europe attracted him because it was the only place where he could find women with money willing to be fleeced. For all his successes, however, with them he was desperately poor when he took up his residence in a Trieste hotel. His only assets were his clothes and his linguistic ability, but very soon he had obtained the acquaintance of many of the leading families in the Austrian seaport town, and his fertile brain was ever at work endeavouring to evolve a scheme for providing him with capital.

It was a sudden inspiration at a dinner party given by an Austrian general, who had readily accepted von Veltheim as the son of a high officer in the German Army, when it occurred to the swindler to add another lie to his huge repertory. By this time his local friend regarded him as an intimate friend of Paul Kruger, and the one man who stood between the little South African republic and the mighty forces of Great Britain. As the latter was unpopular on account of the South African war von Veltheim posed as the champion of the Boers, and so when he took the general aside and whispered to him a dramatic story of how he had helped Kruger to convey his treasure from Johannesburg and bury it in a lonely spot on the veldt, the poverty-stricken and dazzlingly uniformed Austrian general swallowed the story with sharklike avidity.

"It is worth ten millions," said the rogue, gravely, "and if I had sufficient capital to organise a small expedition I could recover the whole of it and make all my friends wealthy."

It did not matter to his dupes that the aged ex-president was still alive and that he might possibly object to his treasure being stolen. They subscribed twenty thousand pounds and handed it over to von Veltheim, and patiently waited for the enormous dividends to be sent to them. The inevitable sequel to this sudden access to funds was the immediate

disappearance of the crook, and fortified with cash he was able to take the part of the wealthy aristocrat in search of a pretty wife. It was not accident or coincidence that his choice alighted on a pretty young woman who had a fortune and a lot of jewellery. He married her and robbed her, and departed for America, where he had more matrimonial adventures and tricked successfully several astute business men. For a short season the self-styled secret agent, friend and confidant of Kruger, son of a German general or admiral—he often changed the rank of his father!—and friend of every crowned head in Europe was a favourite attraction at parties in the houses of leading Americans. Of course, adverse rumours were circulated as to the veracity of the handsome adventurer, but his aristocratic bearing and charming manners silenced his detractors. As usual, it was von Veltheim who brought about von Veltheim's temporary defeats, and it was the stupid and unnecessary swindle which compelled him to return to Europe.

On the voyage a refined and educated girl of good family fell in love with him at first sight, and, as marriage was a habit with the low-class German criminal, he added her to his long list of victims, cruelly casting her aside when he thought she could be of no further use to him. In the same year he married another woman, and it was before he had had time to grow tired of her that he planned to blackmail Mr. Solly Joel. Von Veltheim was now fifty years of age and growing rather tired of a wandering life. For ten years he had banished the Joels from his life, and now, when he contemplated settling down, it was to that family of millionaires that his thoughts turned.

But Mr. Solly Joel refused to be blackmailed, and the moment he received a demand from the German for some thousands of pounds he very wisely sought the assistance of the police and responded to their request that the crook should be brought to book.

The end of one phase of an astonishing career was now approaching, though when the French police arrested von Veltheim at his hotel in Paris he professed to fear nothing. For weeks he lay in a Paris gaol, while the lawyers fought their battle, and when it went against him he travelled to England confidently and entered the dock at the Old Bailey with the demeanour of a king.

The atmosphere of the Old Bailey is somehow too chilling and repellent to enable even the most theatrical of villains to maintain a convincing pose in the dock, and although von Veltheim was fully conscious of the intense interest he created, and it was obvious that he wished to impress the court by his personality, he collapsed and fell to pieces during his cross-examination by Sir Charles Gill (I give that famous counsel the rank he acquired some years later). Sir Charles was more than usually icy, and his demeanour towards the prisoner was so cold-blooded as to be almost sardonic. In his first half dozen questions he penetrated the armour of lies with which von Veltheim had encased himself. "All your statements refer to persons no longer living," he said, in effect. "Cannot you refer us to someone who is alive?" The prisoner tried to fence by blandly insinuating that it was not his fault that the only people he mentioned during his cross-examination by his own counsel were in their graves, and when Sir Charles pressed his original question he fell back upon that device of the adventurer at bay—protesting that he dare not tell all he knew because of the scandal his loquacity would create.

He was closely questioned concerning his relations with Woolf Joel, and it was here that the rogue blundered badly. There is no doubt that during the long time he lay in prison in Paris and London he carefully prepared his defence and that he attempted to reconcile the stories he had told at different times of his life of adventure. But he unaccountably forgot that

there was a complete record of his evidence in Johannesburg when he was tried for the murder of Woolf Joel, and it was by pointing out his contradictions in 1908 of the statements he had made ten years previously that counsel dealt him the heaviest blow at the Old Bailey. In vain did the expert liar parry the thrusts of the brilliant cross-examiner, and von Veltheim returned to the dock a shattered idol. There were the usual speeches afterwards, but they had very little effect on the jury who must have made up their minds when Sir Charles asked his last question.

When the inevitable verdict had been recorded, the packed court listened to the dry, unemotional reading of the convict's record by Inspector Penton, of the City Police. It was a disillusionment as well as an exposure, and it transformed the imaginary hero of Kruger's buried treasure and other fairy tales into a sordid, common-place blackmailer. No wonder von Veltheim was moved to anger by it, but his outbursts were the last cries of a desperate man who, knowing that he was doomed to spend some years in penal servitude, was passionately anxious to leave behind him a legend of greatness.

When the recital was over we thought that we had witnessed the last sensation of a sensational trial, but Mr. Justice Phillimore proved that we were wrong.

"Twenty years' penal servitude," he said, in a quiet, conversational tone. The words were echoing above us when we turned to look at the doomed man. He stood rigid and impassive, with blank eyes and tight lips. For the moment he was lifeless, and when one of his warders touched him on the shoulder his convulsive start was almost a resurrection.

In his cell he collapsed, too broken to rail against his doom. "I didn't expect more than five years," he said, when on his way to Dartmoor, "but twenty years means for life."

The Home Secretary, however, was merciful. He

reduced the sentence to fifteen years, transferred him to an internment camp in 1918, and later deported him to his native country. But in April, 1928, von Veltheim was heard of again, and the world learnt that the now out-of-date adventurer was in trouble in South Africa for infringing the immigration laws and that he had been deported to Germany.

## CHAPTER XV

**THERE** is only one man in the history of swindling whose exploits may be said to rival those of James Townsend Saward, popularly known as "Jim the Penman," and he is Adam Worth. Both were veritable kings of crime, men born to command, who utilised their great natural gifts for evil purposes and who, for a long time, controlled gangs of crooks, who obeyed them implicitly and with dog-like devotion. For more than twenty years Saward earned a huge income by his misdeeds, but when at last he was run to earth it was Chance, the detective, that was responsible for his arrest.

Saward, a barrister of the Inner Temple and a member of a well-known family, was a favourite in Bohemian circles in the West End of London when he discovered that he could imitate almost any signature after a few minutes' practice. At the time he thought nothing of it, and he had certainly dismissed the subject from his mind the night he attended the reception given by the wife of the Attorney-General for England.

The invitation had taken him by surprise, for he had not practised in the courts, and he was unacquainted with her ladyship, but he owed it to his relationship to a well-known diplomatic family, and Saward, only too willing to hob-nob with the big-wigs of his profession, broke an appointment with a young lady who was performing in a play at the Haymarket, and, arrayed in fashionable evening clothes, duly put in an appearance, and for some hours was in "society."

But he was neither comfortable nor happy. During the previous five years he had become a gambler, and,



despite some extraordinary runs of good luck, his financial position was now so bad that ruin seemed certain. He had squandered away all his private means; he had exhausted his sources of supply, and there was not a moneylender in the country who would as much as consider an application from him for a loan. And Saward loved luxury, and the thought of poverty horrified him. Ever since he had been called to the Bar he had lived without working, spending his days in idleness and his nights in gambling and dissipation. He had posed as a rich man, and had gained the friendship of innumerable actresses and their kind, and he shrank from having to admit to them that he was an impostor.

But something happened at the reception which changed the whole current of his life. He was preparing to leave when he caught sight of a piece of paper lying on the floor. Picking it up, he saw that it was a letter, and that it bore the signature of one of the leading men at the Bar, a famous Q.C., who afterwards became a judge of the High Court. Saward thrust it into his pocket and walked back to his chambers in a thoughtful frame of mind, but, late as the hour was, and tired as he must have been, he did not go to bed. There was work to be done, for the letter he had found contained the information where its writer banked, and this was sufficient for the briefless barrister to forge a cheque for fifteen pounds in the name of the eminent counsel.

It was his first effort in crime, and it was a modest one, because he wished to find his way carefully, but, suitably disguised, he found no difficulty in cashing the cheque and staving off a persistent creditor with part of the proceeds. Strangely enough, the forgery was never found out, the victim, apparently, accepting the cheque as a genuine one, for Saward never heard of it again.

His success determined Saward on his career. Henceforth he would earn his living as a forger. It struck

him as being very safe and not involving too much work, and it had the additional advantage of leaving him free to visit the numerous gambling hells in the West End and playing recklessly with cash so easily obtained.

With consummate skill, however, he moved slowly and cautiously, and when he realised that he could not succeed completely without expert assistance he gradually gathered together a gang of burglars, pickpockets and adventurers, all of whom submitted to his rule, knowing that he was a man of education and social position, and, best of all, was brainy and resourceful. His first recruit was a merchant of the name of William Hardwicke, a man who had once been fairly prominent in business circles in the City of London.

Hardwicke was able to inform Saward where certain rich traders kept their accounts, and also obtain for him specimens of their signatures and blank cheques. Two others were added later in the persons of Atwell and Anderson, who could be relied on to burgle or to pose as "gentlemen" or "clerks in search of situations"—in fact, they were real "handymen," who proved invaluable. These four men were the Grand Council of the gang, the remaining members being common burglars or pickpockets, who were paid so much for their services, and seldom saw the chief, and knew him only as a man who spotted cribs for them to crack, and who occasionally was eccentric enough to order them to break into a house to obtain a few blank cheques and not bother about the silver, although there might be plenty of it. They obeyed him, and, accordingly, never wanted for money, for the chief's plans worked perfectly for years.

The usual procedure was for Hardwicke or Anderson or Atwell to report to their leader that a particular merchant was "fair game," and that they could get a blank cheque of his as well as a specimen of his handwriting. When this was done, Saward would

forge a cheque for anything from twenty to two or three hundred pounds in the name of the intended victim, and when it was ready to be presented a clerk would be engaged by Hardwicke, or by one of the others, and sent to the bank to cash the cheque.

The innocent employee, who would not know Hardwicke's real name or address—both those given to him being merely temporary—would, as a rule, receive the money from the bank cashier, and on leaving the building would be met by one of the gang, who would pay him his week's salary (after being handed the proceeds of the cheque), and inform him that his services were no longer required. As this course of action was repeated on an average three times a week, it will be understood that Saward's three confederates were kept busy hiring lodgings under false names and interviewing innocent dupes there.

If Saward never actually took an active part in the cashing of the cheques he was generally on hand to keep a sharp eye on his friends. None of the gang trusted the other, and they did not believe that there was anything like honour amongst thieves. When, on one occasion, Saward cleverly forged a cheque for a thousand pounds, and a youth was dispatched to cash it, the chief, Hardwicke, Anderson and Atwell all followed him, suspecting that whoever got the money from the clerk would retain the greater portion of it. Thus, when the cheque was actually presented, Hardwicke was pretending to be filling in a paying-in form, and as he was writing he was almost brushing shoulders with the clerk. Outside the door, Atwell was lingering, while Anderson—who had interviewed the youth, and could not, therefore, make himself prominent—was loitering in a doorway opposite; and Saward, who had lost very heavily the previous night at baccarat, was strolling down the street with one eye on the bank in which the cashier was slowly in turn, counting ten pound notes. He had arranged

them in a neat bundle, and was about to push them towards the messenger, when he suddenly picked up the cheque again and glanced at it.

"Just a moment," he said, casually, "I wish to compare the signature with some other cheques drawn by this gentleman."

When he heard this, Hardwicke knew that the forgery must be discovered, and he promptly walked out, and as he passed his chief he took out his watch and glanced at it. This was the usual signal that something had gone wrong, and in a few minutes the gang had vanished. The clerk was, of course, detained, only to be released when he had proved that he had been a tool of a daring forger, but although the detectives spent weeks trying to trace the author of the swindle, they never even got a clue.

Quite undismayed by this temporary rebuff, the gang continued their depredations. Saward was now spending £10,000 a year, and he was heavily in debt. No income could keep pace with his extravagance, and, large as were his gains, he was constantly in danger of arrest for failure to keep his liabilities. The marvel is how he retained his steady hand and clear eye, and how he should have never neglected his "business," for night after night he was to be seen in the gaming saloons, and he seldom went to bed before five in the morning.

Yet there was not a week in which at least three persons were not swindled by means of cheques forged on their banking accounts, and the knowledge that the police were now fully aware that a skilful gang of forgers were at work did not dismay him. He knew that his followers would never betray the fact that the criminal who associated with many of the most notorious characters in the underworld of London was James Townsend Saward, Esq., barrister and patron of the stage and the arts!

The first crisis in the history of the gang was

indirectly due to a woman for whom both Saward and Hardwicke conceived a passion. She was as beautiful as she was unscrupulous, and she did not bother to pose as a hypocrite. She declared that the man with the most money would be her favourite, and in that respect Hardwicke had the advantage of his chief, for the latter was living at the rate of double his income, while Hardwicke's tastes were not nearly so expensive, and he had something in hand.

But just as he was making headway with this Delilah of Camberwell he was arrested on a charge of forgery—it was an affair which he had worked entirely on his own—and at the Old Bailey he got ten years. It was a knock-down blow for the crook, who had lived in the lap of luxury since he had enlisted under the banner of "Jim the Penman." Once he was very nearly on the point of giving away the whole gang, hoping, thereby, to secure a remission of part of his sentence, but when the governor of the prison, for whom he had sent, entered his cell, he simply complained of his health, for in the interim Hardwicke had realised that Saward's followers would murder a "traitor."

Before he was released, however, he nearly convinced himself that he had been betrayed by Saward who wished to have the pretty young woman to himself, but years were to elapse before he was to obtain the full proof that his suspicions were correct.

The campaign of forgery was uninterrupted by Hardwicke's imprisonment, and tens of thousands of pounds passed into the coffers of Saward, who extended his operations and became a recognised buyer of blank cheques, bills of exchange and any documents that could, by a few strokes of his facile pen, be converted into money. When Burgess and his confederates robbed the South-Eastern Railway of £12,000 worth of bullion gold and found themselves unable to dispose of it, Saward purchased a considerable quantity and relieved their embarrassment. He increased the

number of his burglary gangs and organised a method by which cheques, etc., were sent to him, and silver articles, pictures and anything that the "fences" would be willing to buy were unostentatiously conveyed to a receiver of stolen goods he could trust.

The bewilderment of the police may be imagined. Saward left them guessing every time. Additional detectives were sent to prowl about the city banks and to scrutinise strangers, but forged cheques continued to be cashed under their noses, and some of these forgeries were so well done that the very men whose handwriting they professed to be could not swear for certain that it was not theirs.

In view of the failure of the detectives, it is not surprising that Saward grew careless and left large trails behind him, yet the authorities could not read them correctly. They ought to have identified the burglaries committed by members of the mysterious gang for the simple reason that each one was noticeable for the fact that the marauders took special pains to locate where the owner of the house kept his cheque book, and that the outrage on property was followed by the forgery of one or more cheques on the victimised householder's account.

But the time came when Saward realised that he must attack some other members of the community, for in the course of several years he had robbed so many city merchants that there were not many left who were available for his purpose.

To open up a new source of income he invented one of the most ingenious of swindling schemes. He had decided to turn his attention to solicitors, and by obtaining specimens of their signatures forge cheques in their names for large sums. The initial difficulty was, of course, finding a means whereby the manner they signed their cheques could be ascertained. It was useless going by the title of the firm, for John Smith, solicitor, might sign letters one way and cheques

another. However, "Jim the Penman," was equal to the emergency.

He first concocted an I O U for one hundred pounds in the name of a Mr. Hesp, and this he gave to Atwell with instructions to take it to the office of Mr. Alfred Turner, solicitor, of Red Lion Square, and engage him to write to "Mr. Hesp" for immediate payment. In the meantime another member of the gang, Anderson, rented a bedroom in the name of "Hesp," and when Turner's letter arrived he promptly sent the hundred pounds to the lawyer. Now Saward expected that Mr. Turner would pay the notes received from "Hesp," into his account and give Atwell a cheque for the amount, less costs, but when Atwell called the lawyer's clerk had a large sum in cash in hand, and he promptly settled the account with it, the rogue not daring to ask for a cheque.

This was an accident which upset the forger's plans for a while, but he did not intend that Mr. Turner should escape, and once again he tried the trick. This time, Anderson interviewed the solicitor about a debt he said a Mr. Jenkins owed him, and as "Jenkins"—in reality Atwell—paid the debt immediately the solicitor demanded it, the transaction was soon completed by Mr. Turner handing Anderson a cheque for the sum claimed. With this cheque before him, Saward forged three cheques for £108, £280 and £410, and all of them were duly honoured by the bank.

Other solicitors were victimised by the same means, and in a couple of months seven lawyers had their banking accounts depleted to the extent of eleven thousand five hundred pounds. Saward was now in the early fifties, and twenty years of crime had not improved him.

Night after night he was to be found gambling away the proceeds of his forgeries, and no matter how many thousands came his way he was always in financial difficulties. Now and then he roused himself to attend

a dinner party at a West End mansion, and he enjoyed in a sardonic way the excessive politeness of the police who saluted the gentleman in evening dress who passed them in the fashionable square. Sometimes he dined with men whose cheques he had forged, and more than once he commiserated with them when they were railing against the mysterious forger who had created a reign of terror amongst the London banks.

No one suspected the barrister. He might have the reputation of being rather dissipated and a waster, but nothing had ever been said against his honour. But he was mean enough to rob those who entertained him, and he did not shrink from picking the pockets of a somnolent fellow-guest and imitating the signature on the cheques thus acquired. Business was business with him always, and he was ever on the look-out for opportunities to prove that there was no handwriting he could not copy accurately.

He owed his immunity from arrest chiefly to the fact that he never cashed the cheques himself, and that when danger threatened he was as far away from it as possible. Occasionally he was cheated by one of his followers because he was not on the spot, but the loss was not considerable, and he pretended he was ignorant of it, knowing that the time must come when he would be able to square accounts with his treacherous adherent. Those who were faithful he richly rewarded, and if any of them suffered an "accident" and were sent to prison their dependants received a regular weekly allowance from the "chief."

Saward's financial position had not improved, although inside twenty years more than two hundred thousand pounds had passed through his hands, and he was actually planning to leave London for a while in order to escape the importunities of his creditors when, as he was walking down the Strand, he ran into William Hardwicke. The two men stared at each other in astonishment before the king of forgers held out his hand.



"I never expected to see you so soon, Bill," he exclaimed, warmly.

"I earned a reduction by good conduct," Hardwicke said, in a tone which was anything but cordial.

"Well, I'm glad we've met," remarked Saward, not at all disconcerted by his former confederate's refusal to take his hand. "I've missed you, Bill, and I hope you'll join me at once, for I've some big schemes, and——"

"Where's Isabel?" asked Hardwicke, abruptly.

"I don't know," said Jim the Penman, with affected indifference. "When you met with your misfortune she was so heartless about it that I gave her the chuck. She's since married the chap who used to keep the King's Head public-house at Hammersmith."

This was an elaborate lie, for Saward had only deserted Isabel when he had grown tired of her, but it sufficed to disarm Hardwicke, who agreed to rejoin the gang.

"I've worked London bone-dry," Saward explained when they were having dinner together in his rooms, "and I've decided to visit the principal provincial towns and cities, and see what can be done there."

"That's a splendid idea!" exclaimed Hardwicke, who, in view of his conviction, was too well known to the London police to have much chance of engaging in anything illegal without being spotted; "I'd like to spend a week or two by the sea."

"Then we'll begin on Yarmouth," said the forger, promptly, "and you and Atwell shall represent me there."

Ways and means were discussed, and, finally, it was settled that Hardwicke should call himself in Yarmouth, "Mr. Ralph," and in that name open an account at a local bank. This would be an introduction to local commercial circles, and give him some standing, so that when Saward was ready to forge cheques on well-known Yarmouth merchants and other business persons, Hardwicke would be able to supply the raw material in the shape of blank cheques.

By the usual means funds for the Yarmouth campaign were obtained in London, and £250 was given to Hardwicke, who went to the headquarters of Barclay and Co., bankers, in the city, and paid it in the name of Mr. Whitney. By some unaccountable blunder Hardwicke forgot to tell the cashier at Barclay's that the money was to be placed to the credit of "Mr. Ralph" at Yarmouth. All he did do was to intimate that the money was Mr. Whitney's and that it was to be sent to Yarmouth, having momentarily forgotten all about the other name, Ralph.

A few days later the Yarmouth agents of Barclay's were called on by a Mr. Ralph, who stated that his friend, Mr. Whitney, had placed £250 to his account there.

"We've received no instructions to that effect," said the manager, who had never heard the name of Ralph before.

"Are you sure?" asked Hardwicke, who was puzzled because he had himself impersonated Mr. Whitney in London and was sure he had given the order to the bank there.

"Quite," the manager said. "We have received the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, but it is in Mr. Whitney's name, and, of course, we will not pay it to anyone except Mr. Whitney himself. If it is to be credited to anyone else Mr. Whitney must call here in person and say so."

Scarcely able to conceal his chagrin or hide his confusion, Hardwicke retreated, and when he could recall what had happened when he had visited Barclay's Bank in London he realised that he had committed a blunder. He had forgotten to say that Mr. Whitney wished the money to be placed to the credit of "Mr. Ralph," and, consequently, the Yarmouth agents were in possession of his capital, and he dare not claim it for fear the inquiries should be made and the conspiracy discovered.

Returning to his lodgings, he wrote to Saward telling him of the disaster, and the forger, not dismayed, sent a long letter full of instructions as to how to overcome the difficulty. None of the rogues realised, as yet, that the apparently trivial mistake was to result in their capture and conviction.

They could not imagine this, and so they attempted to regain the two hundred and fifty pounds.

But "Mr. Ralph" had excited the suspicion of the Yarmouth gentleman who represented Messrs. Barclay, and he sent his principals in London a full description of him. This enabled headquarters to identify Ralph as the Mr. Whitney who had in the first place paid the two hundred and fifty pounds to them, and there was something so fishy about that that they consulted with the police. The latter had nothing against either "Mr. Ralph" or "Mr. Whitney," but they were anxious to lay their hands on the crooks who were causing the banks so much loss and anxiety, and they risked it, and arrested Hardwicke and Atwell on charges of conspiracy. As the two men had remained in Yarmouth to carry out "Jim the Penman's" instructions regarding the recovery of their capital they were easily captured.

Saward's letter was found on Hardwicke. It was not signed by the rogue, but it proved a valuable clue, though it was not until Hardwicke and Atwell had been tried and sentenced to transportation for life that Saward and Anderson were taken into custody. They were placed on trial, and their convicted confederates gave evidence against them. This was Hardwicke's revenge against his chief for having betrayed him when they were both courting the fair Isabel.

But even without Hardwicke's evidence Saward would have been found guilty, for once he was in custody the police had no difficulty in proving his guilt by the papers they found in his rooms. His sentence was for life, too.

## CHAPTER XVI

**THE** ability to think clearly and quickly and act promptly and courageously is the hallmark of the born detective. Nine out of every ten crimes provide their own solutions, but it is the tenth that tests the brain and nerve. It is then that genius has its chance and perseverance its opportunity, and if neither is utilised the sequel is another addition to the long list of unsolved mysteries. The man who can realise at once the vital importance of the apparently trivial is not likely to fail, though his colleagues may despair, and it is due entirely to this type of detective that so many criminals have been brought to justice when the odds against their capture have been tremendous. I will illustrate my meaning by relating a story of the late Chief Inspector John Sexton, of New Scotland Yard. Sexton was an intimate friend of M. Hamard, the chief of the Paris police, and the two men often collaborated in their work, their most famous partnership arising out of the murder of Madame Laurent in Paris, which the Englishman solved in London.

Madame Laurent was a miserly old woman who kept a small shop and had a reputation for wealth which inspired the motive for her death. Sexton, arriving at his office in Scotland Yard one morning, read a long account of the crime drawn up by Hamard. The Frenchman related how Madame Laurent had been found strangled with a duster in her mouth within a few feet of the table where she had dined with her mysterious companion. Three empty wine bottles indicated an unusual generosity on madame's part and a huge thirst on her murderer's. Fortunately

there was a fingermark on one of the bottles which was sufficient to connect a certain member of the Parisian underworld with the crime, but he had left France immediately, and Hamard asked Sexton to arrest him if he was in London. A detailed description of the suspect was appended, but before studying it, Sexton telegraphed to Paris asking for the name of the brand of wine which had figured so prominently in the tragic supper. It was immediately supplied, and the Scotland Yard man, aware that this particular brand had a very restricted sale in London, knew that he had obtained a more important clue than his French *confrères* imagined. Within a few hours Sexton ascertained that there were only two restaurants in Soho which stocked this wine, and he made a point of visiting them every evening, believing that if the Frenchman was in London he would patronise one of them. Three days after he had heard from Hamard, the English detective walked down between the double row of tables in the more popular of the restaurants, and at the table furthest from the door came face to face with the man he wanted. The murderer was eating voraciously, but the most prominent object on the table was a bottle of wine, and the brand was the same as that consumed by Madame Laurent and her guest on the night of her murder. Sexton sat down opposite the Frenchman and informed him of his identity and mission, and when the murderer calmly requested to be allowed to finish his meal the detective, always the most tactful of men, consented, though he confessed afterwards that he scarcely touched the food he had to order for appearance's sake. The Frenchman was extradited in due course, but for some inexplicable reason was not guillotined, and a sentence of twenty years' imprisonment was deemed an adequate punishment for a very cowardly and cold-blooded crime. It was discovered soon after the Frenchman's arrest that he had completed his preparations for flight to America and

that his dinner was to have been his farewell to London. Had Sexton relied on the mere description of him he must have escaped and Madame Laurent's murder would never have been avenged. It was the genius of the Scotland Yard detective in estimating instantly the supreme value of the apparently trivial clue of the empty wine bottles that checkmated the ruffian.

Mere luck is of no use to the detective or policeman unless he is clever enough to take full advantage of it. Some years ago the naked body of a man was found in a Paris suburb. Near by was a pile of clothes, a pair of boots and a hat. The victim was unknown in the neighbourhood and none of the locals knew who he was. A young detective suggested that the corpse should be dressed, and when this was done it was seen that the clothes belonged to the murderer and not to the victim, and, accordingly, renewed efforts were made to identify the latter. When chance achieved this the authorities confined themselves to looking for a person who called himself Schenepine—the name of the murdered man—and they very soon had the murderer under lock and key. The criminal had hoped to escape by assuming the personality of his victim, but the ill-fitting garments he had left with the dead led to his undoing.

There was less detective ability displayed by the Bodmin constable who unexpectedly arrested Ollison, the murderer. A few days previously a little girl had met her death at the hands of a brutal ruffian, and the crime had excited a horror which was tinged with anger against the official force when it was rumoured that the police were completely puzzled. The only clue they had consisted of a few strands of flaxen hair which the child had torn from her assailant's head in her efforts to defend herself and which she had retained tightly clutched in her hand in death. All the known doubtful characters supplied adequate alibis, and the official theory was that the murderer was a stranger to Bodmin, who had by now submerged himself in

one of the big cities. It was at this juncture that a constable entered a barber's shop to be shaved and took his place on the settle to wait his turn. Having nothing better to do he glanced at the man next to him and was instantly struck by the resemblance his hair bore to the previous strands now imprisoned in the chief constable's safe. The policeman, taking advantage of the freedom of the shop, entered into conversation, and by means of a few skilfully phrased questions elicited sufficient information to warrant him arresting the stranger. At the station, Ollison, forgetting that the evidence against him was of the flimsiest, volunteered a statement which contained so many lies that he unwittingly provided the detectives with most of the proof they lacked, and in the end he was convicted and executed.

Buttons have figured prominently in the adventures of the detective of fiction, but it is not necessary to go to the novelists for the most startling instances of crime solved by such meagre clues. I recall two—the Hampstead murder of 1845 and the Eltham Common murder of 1918. In each case the criminal was traced by a button, but there the connection between the tragedies ends, for one was premeditated and the other was not. Thomas Hocker planned the murder of his friend, James Delarue, with a patience and thoroughness that seemed to guarantee success. His motive was a monetary one, Delarue being a teacher of music who was, according to his own statement, in the habit of carrying about with him large sums of money, and as Hocker's earnings as a shoemaker were contemptible, he determined to provide himself with capital by luring Delarue to a lonely spot on Hampstead Heath and killing him. To divert suspicion from himself Hocker devoted hours to compiling a letter purporting to emanate from a young lady of the name of Caroline, imploring Delarue to save her from disgrace by marrying her. The letter contained a strong hint that she had a doughty brother who was burning with a desire to

take the life of her betrayer and it finished with an appeal to her lover to meet her on the heath to discuss her future. As the music teacher had a reputation for gallantry Hocker believed that the discovery of the letter in his pocket would inspire the detectives to seek the murderer amongst the relatives of the numerous girls with whom Delarue had had "affairs."

The plotter also concocted an alibi for himself and during the days preceding the crime displayed a partiality for Delarue's society in order that their intimacy and friendship should be known of all men. Then, with the letter in his pocket, he persuaded Delarue to walk with him across the loneliest part of Hampstead Heath on a foggy February night, and when they were surrounded by ghostlike shrubs and trees, and darkness and a thick fog shut out the rest of the world, he suddenly raised his loaded stick and beat down upon Delarue's head until the latter collapsed in unconsciousness and death, but not before he had uttered one shrill cry of "Murder!" which the cold wind carried as far as a couple of men on their way to a public-house. Hocker had just transferred the compromising letter to Delarue's body and had discovered for himself that his former friend had been a boaster and a liar about his monetary affairs when the sound of footfalls sent him running for safety. He was, however, protected by the darkness, and he had not to go far, and he was only a hundred yards off when the light of a lantern told of the arrival of the police. The murderer should have made for safety, but he was irresistibly drawn towards the spot where the corpse lay, and when he came up to it and asked for information of the tragedy there was no hostility or suspicion in the voice and demeanour of the solitary constable who was in charge during the absence of his superior in search of a doctor. "I heard a cry and saw a light," Hocker explained, in his quiet, restrained manner. "You haven't been here before, sir?" asked the policeman. The murderer assured him he had not,



and his answer was remembered when in searching the vicinity, the button of an overcoat was found which clearly had never belonged to the deceased. It was then recollected that the "young gentleman" who had proffered his assistance on Hampstead Heath had had a button missing from his overcoat, and although the detectives were inclined to take the "Caroline" letter seriously the button clue eventually convinced them that "Caroline" had no existence in the flesh. Hocker was shadowed, his home visited and his statements tested, and sooner than anyone had expected the mystery was solved and there was a sensational Old Bailey trial in the course of which, the accused gave an extraordinary display of eccentricity. He threw his counsel over, delivered a lengthy speech, and did as much as anyone to secure his own conviction. He was, of course, executed.

There was nothing remarkable in the crime of the young soldier, Greenwood, who murdered Nellie Trew on Eltham Common. It was a sordid affair which would not have excited the public had it not been that at one time it seemed likely that the murderer would escape. A button torn from a military coat was the only clue and the country was crammed with soldiers just then, but the clue sufficed, for Greenwood was seen shortly after the murder, and it was noticed that he had a button missing. An enquiry into his movements enabled the police to accumulate sufficient data to justify his arrest, and he was eventually convicted in spite of a strenuous defence. Greenwood, who was scarcely more than a boy, escaped execution, and is now serving a life sentence.

James Mullins, the murderer of Mrs. Elmsley, of Stepney, in 1860, was of the Hocker type in that he took great pains to secure the path to safety for himself. Yet he blundered badly, although he had had some experience of the police. Mrs. Elmsley was a real, old-fashioned miser who lived alone and treated humanity

with a distrust and contempt which did not tend to make her popular. Mullins, a plasterer by trade, occasionally worked for her, and as he was almost the only male admitted to her house he was tempted to murder and rob her, believing that she kept a huge sum in specie on the premises. He carried out his plans, but was disappointed with the financial result, and when a reward of three hundred pounds was offered for the detection of the murderer he thought he would earn it by fastening suspicion on a harmless shoemaker, Walter Emms. He, therefore, made a parcel of a few odds and ends he had stolen from Mrs. Elmsley, concealed it under a stone in the vicinity of the shoemaker's home, and one Sunday morning led a party of detectives to the spot, having assured them that he had seen Emms bury it. When it was reclaimed Emms was arrested, and Mullins accompanied him and his captor to the police station at the urgent request of the inspector who had noticed that a shoelace had been used to tie the incriminating parcel and that it was of the same pattern as the laces Mullins was wearing. This inconvenient coincidence was revealed to the murderer in the inspector's room and although Emms was detained, his accuser was also given the tenancy of a cell. The Irishman had, in fact, over-reached himself, and he knew it when the shoemaker was discharged by the magistrate and he was committed for trial. The prosecution had an easy task at the Old Bailey, and Mullins was convicted and paid the penalty for his crime, thanks to the clue of the shoelace.

Laundry marks on linen solved two of the most notorious of modern crimes. I am referring to Bennett's murder of his wife on Yarmouth Beach in 1901 and the slaying of Madame Gerard during the air-raid on London on October 31st, 1917. The latter was a real Grand Guignol drama, with its ingredients of horror, terror, morbid passion and frenzied jealousy. What could be more dramatic than the situation of Louis

Voisin, the butcher, when, in taking shelter from the bombs of the air-raiders, he found himself in a cellar with the two women who were madly in love with him and who now met for the first time ! Amid the roar of the guns the old and eternal problem of the human triangle was solved by the murder of Madame Gerard, whose reproaches when she learnt of her lover's unfaithfulness drove him into striking the blow which, doubtless, he did not intend to be fatal. When, however, he realised he had gone too far he did not hesitate to complete his crime, and there and then he dismembered the corpse, and when on November 2nd a male nurse picked up the parcel of human remains in Regent Square and took it to the police the latter had never heard of the existence of Louis Voisin or of the women who had shaped his destiny. The only clue to the identity of the victim was a tiny laundry mark on a portion of the linen enveloping one of the limbs, but this was made the most of by the detectives, who visited every laundry in the West End of London until they came to the proprietress who was able to assure them that the article had been sent to them by a Madame Gerard. Once the name of the murdered woman was discovered it needed little more than perseverance to bring Voisin and the other woman into the tragedy, and the butcher was executed.

The story of the Muswell Hill murder is an oft-told tale and I do not propose to repeat it here, but not many persons have heard of the plan adopted by the police to establish the ownership of the penny toy lantern found near the scene of old Mr. Smith's death. A little comedy had to be staged to prepare the tragedy for the Old Bailey, and it was performed in a little shop in the East End where Harry Miller, the juvenile brother-in-law of Milsom, one of the men suspected of the murder of Mr. Smith, was in the habit of purchasing on behalf of his mother the daily loaf. The penny lantern, insignificant and grimy, was placed on the counter, and a detective was stationed out of sight

just before the lad's arrival. At the expected moment the boy entered with his customary nonchalance, but when he saw the lantern he became alert and indignant.

"'Ere, wot are you doin' with my lantern?" he cried, grabbing it.

The detective appeared to contest his claim.

"How do you know it's yours?" he asked, gravely. There were thousands of similar toy lanterns in London and unless incontestably identified this specimen would prove a useless clue at the Old Bailey.

"I know it's mine," the boy retorted. "Look at the wick—it's made out of a bit of cloth my married sister gave me."

The married sister was Mrs. Milsom, and her husband was never able to explain satisfactorily how his brother-in-law's toy had travelled all the way from Whitechapel to Muswell Hill. His companion in crime, Fowler, could not explain either, and the two ruffians were executed along with Seaman, the murderer of Levy and Sarah Gale. The authorities at Newgate anticipating a fracas on the scaffold—Fowler had attempted to strangle his partner in crime in the dock at the Old Bailey—placed Seaman between them, and a moment or so before the bolt was drawn the latter was heard to mutter, "This is the first time in my life I've acted as a peacemaker!" And with that jest on his lips Seaman accompanied the Muswell Hill murderers into eternity!

The only clue to the murderer of Captain Tighe, of Wimbledon Common, was the fact that he had used a poker. There had been an epidemic of burglaries in the district and in most cases the burglar had forced an entry with the aid of a poker. The murderer was at large for many days, but when Victor de Stamir was arrested for burglary and his penchant for pokers proved, efforts were made to connect him with the midnight struggle in Winkfield Lodge, which had resulted in the death of the retired officer. The detectives

worked out a very difficult problem with remarkable skill, and de Stamir was convicted. That he never expected to be suspected of the murder was evident when he admitted that, subsequent to the encounter with Captain Tighe, he had committed five burglaries.

Chance played a big part in the conviction of George Ball of the murder of Miss Catherine Bradfield at Liverpool in the last month of 1913. When the body of the unfortunate lady was fished out of the Mersey it was easy enough to prove her identity, but there was no direct evidence against anyone, and the police felt that they had a stiff case to tackle, but the publicity given by the papers to the finding of the corpse caused Walter Eaves, a ship's steward, to recall the incident of a shutter falling on his head in Old Hall Street, on the night of December 10th. Old Hall Street was mentioned in reports of the case because Miss Bradfield had managed her brother's business there, and it now occurred to Mr. Eaves that the large sack he had seen a young man place on a barrow might have contained the body of the unfortunate lady. Mr. Eaves remembered the young man because he had given him two shillings to compensate him for the injury done to his hat by the falling shutter, and it was the statement of the ship's steward to the detective in charge of the investigation that fastened the crime on George Ball and led to the hue and cry which for ten days kept the whole country, particularly Liverpool, in a condition of nervous uncertainty. Ball got clean away, and despite the efforts of a small army of police succeeded in evading arrest by cleverly disguising himself, but he forgot to disguise his rather peculiar walk, and he was on his way to see the football match between Everton and Chelsea at Goodison Park when an old acquaintance identified him by his gait. "That's George Ball," he cried, excitedly, and the murderer was in a cell when the first league teams were struggling for points. The present Attorney-General, Sir Gordon Hewart,

prosecuted, and Crippen's counsel, Sir Alfred Tobin, K.C., defended, and after a strenuous and protracted trial a verdict of guilty was recorded by the jury. Ball protested his innocence until the day before his execution. Then, becoming conscious that he would not be reprieved, he confessed his crime to the Bishop of Liverpool.

## CHAPTER XVII

**CRIMINALS** are seldom original, chiefly because as a class they are singularly unintelligent and undeveloped, and also because human nature is in the main fallible and gullible. Why should a rogue trouble to invent new traps when the "confidence" trick continues to find victims in London and New York and "gold bricks" are bought by adults in the twentieth century? Yet now and then a crook does startle the world by bringing off a fraud astonishing alike in its conception and manner of achievement. The most spectacular crime, however, was the work of an amateur, and "Captain" Koepenik, a cobbler with a sense of humour, will always have his place in history. But he was hardly a criminal in the usual meaning of the term, and he deserves well of republican Germany for having been the first man of his race to expose "Prussianism" to the blight of ridicule.

The leader of the "Yellow Kid" gang displayed something of Koepenik's coolness and acting ability when in March, 1918, he swindled an astute American banker out of thirty-six thousand pounds. The fraud was a very remarkable one, and its very simplicity contributed most towards ensuring its success. Of course, it was carefully planned, and luck played an important part, but at the same time it is not difficult to understand how it completely fooled the hard-headed man of the world who was victimised by it.

One afternoon Mr. Albert C. Charles, banker, of Kokomo, Indiana, was interviewed at his office by a tall, well-dressed man whose strong, impressive features and abrupt methods suggested the typical

industrial magnate. When the stranger intimated that he represented a group of capitalists who were anxious to purchase a certain steel plant in which Mr. Charles had heavily invested he was doubly welcome, for the business was languishing for want of ready money and Mr. Charles was very anxious to get rid of it. At the same time the banker was on his guard, for in common with other financiers he had recently been defrauded by sellers of bogus stock purporting to be issued by the directors of the leading American steel companies, and in the course of conversation he referred to his unhappy experience.

"I have heard of that old form of swindle," said Mr. Blake, coolly, "but as I deal only in cash and never in scrip I can't be taken in. Figure out how much you want for the plant, and when we've agreed to terms I'll hand you a certified cheque for the full amount."

It was almost too good to be true, but Mr. Charles was very happy, and the result of a couple of hours' discussion was that he agreed to accept from Mr. Blake the sum of one million seven hundred thousand pounds.

"Before I buy," said the capitalist, who appeared to have forgotten nothing and who had proved during the negotiations that he was up to every move in the business game, "I must see the receipt for the income-tax for the past twelve months."

"It hasn't been paid yet," answered Mr. Charles, "but I will call and settle with the collector this evening."

"In that event I will be here to-morrow morning at ten to complete the deal," said Mr. Blake, and the two men shook hands and parted.

Estimating the exact sum due to the revenue was not an easy task, but Mr. Charles eventually decided that the company owed thirty-six thousand pounds, and with this amount in cash he drove to the building



in which the office of the collector was situated, entered the room on the second floor, paid over the money, was given a receipt, and went home feeling the most contented man in the United States.

But in the morning no Mr. Blake appeared and the hours passed slowly for the banker, who was chagrined to think that the capitalist should have changed his mind. It was only when he received a peremptory demand for payment from the income tax collector that he instituted the inquiries which led to the discovery of the biggest swindle of modern times. Before calling at the bank the "Yellow Kid" had rented the office next to that of the Inland Revenue collector, and, having placed a confederate in it, had visited Mr. Blake and had remained negotiating with him until the revenue office had closed for the day. And once the genuine collector had gone the "Yellow Kid's" partner had merely to change the plates on the office doors to make it certain that Mr. Charles would pay him that thirty-six thousand pounds. Everything worked in favour of the crooks, and they got clear away with the booty.

A more complicated if not more audacious crime was that of a German named Kumf, and it failed only because of the stupidity which is inherent in the cleverest rogues. Kumf was a third-rate comedian who sang in beer-halls and whose speciality was the impersonation of middle-aged women addicted to alcohol, and it was while "resting" that he perpetrated his amazing fraud. Disguised as a woman he presented himself at the office of one of the smaller Berlin insurance companies and informed a clerk that "she" wished to insure her husband's life. The ordinary proposal form was handed to "her," and when it had been filled in the husband was requested to call to be examined by the medical officer. Kumf accordingly re-appeared in male attire, was examined and passed, and all that remained was to pay the first

premium. Here the rogue displayed an artfulness approaching genius. He pretended to be seriously ill and had the rumour of his condition brought to the notice of the company, which immediately sent a doctor to examine him. When the gentleman entered Kumf's bedroom he found him suffering from a rash and with an abnormal temperature, but he reported to his directors that it was nothing very serious. Thus when Kumf, once more dressed as a woman, entered the insurance office with the money to pay the premium it was accepted, and yet he had in a measure prepared the company for his early death.

Having insured himself for twenty thousand marks (then worth a thousand pounds), Kumf set about arranging to collect the cash. In the neighbourhood there was an aged doctor who was nearly blind and deaf, but who did his utmost to conceal these defects, and Kumf quickly turned to advantage the vanity of the ancient medico. Retiring to bed again he dispatched a messenger to Dr. Becker to request his attendance, and when he arrived he found Herr Kumf in a state of coma. The old man prescribed and went away, and in the morning "Frau" Kumf called to inform him that his patient had died. The doctor thereupon gave a certificate, and with this in "her" pocket the disconsolate "widow" extracted the twenty thousand marks from the insurance company.

The fraud was now complete and apparently there was no danger to the crook, but he was so overcome by the possession of so much money that he indulged in an orgy at a distant beer-hall, still disguised as a woman. There his sex was suspected by a policeman, but a tip in time saved the situation, and he returned home in a hilarious condition, waking almost every tenant in the building, where he had rented a room in the name of "Frau Kumf." Amongst the tenants was a porter in the service of the insurance company, and when he casually criticised the callous conduct

of the "widow" in the hearing of a senior clerk, the latter informed a director, who promptly had Kumf's movements shadowed, and three days later the comedian was in a cell in Moabit Prison. The following January—1891—he was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment.

Another impersonation fraud, which, if not quite so elaborate as Herr Kumf's, proved more remunerative, was that of an English matrimonial agent, who perpetrated it again and again until over-confidence rendered him careless and, consequently, vulnerable. His particular swindle deserves mention on account of its elementary simplicity. It was his habit to get into touch by means of advertisements with romantic maiden ladies who were seeking husbands by unconventional means, and when he found a desirable victim he would inform her that he had been commissioned by "a gentleman of forty, tall, and young-looking for his age, who was in want of a wife in the thirties." Stress would be laid on the age, the agent adding that his client had a horror of flappers and "modern young women who talked slang all day long." Of course, the handsome bachelor would be credited with a comfortable but not excessive fortune, and Martin—the agent—would express himself willing to wait until the lady had met his client before asking for a fee.

"If you like him and he proposes to you and you accept him, then you can pay me a hundred guineas for my services," he wrote to one client. "But should you decide to have nothing more to do with him you need not pay me anything."

What could be fairer than that, especially when the generous offer was accompanied by a photograph of the eligible one, which depicted him as exceedingly good to look upon.

The lady having responded with a request for a meeting, the agent would fix an appointment in the Midlands. His office was in Manchester and he did

his business mostly with Londoners, and, consequently, it was at Leicester that he usually met the lady, for, of course, Martin was the original of the photograph, although he had a wife and three children. A man of charming manners, and undeniably handsome, he never had any difficulty in making an impression on the opposite sex, and when he parted from the lady, to whom he had paid devoted attention, she was only too eager to send along the hundred guineas to Martin at Manchester, having come to the conclusion that "Mr. Spencer" was in love with her and would propose at their next meeting. But, alas for her hopes, she would never see the alluring "Mr. Spencer" again, and the only result of her expenditure would be a letter from Martin expressing his regret that his two clients had not come to an understanding and promising to introduce her free of charge to the next gentleman who applied to him for a wife. That was the last she ever heard of Mr. Martin and his friends.

Of course, Martin did not always charge a hundred guineas. He was quite willing to accept half or a quarter of that fee when he could get no more, but he managed to make a considerable income for several years in spite of one or two mishaps. One of these was due to his failure to change his Manchester address immediately he had interviewed a young lady at Rugby, for, delighted by "Mr. Spencer" and anxious to see the charmer again, she journeyed straight on to Manchester with the fee she was to pay. Her object was to ask Mr. Martin to arrange there and then for another interview with the wealthy "Mr. Spencer," and when she walked into his office and saw the "well-to-do bachelor," she guessed how she had been tricked. She did not, however, prosecute, for she occupied a good social position and she dared not face the ridicule of Press and public.

It is good to know, however, that the scoundrel came to grief. Greatly daring, he planned to black-

mail one of his victims, a middle-aged lady, who was the widow of a doctor. She paid hush-money to prevent him exposing her to her friends, but the lady had a trustee who wanted to know why she drew a cheque for a large amount on a certain date, and when his curiosity was satisfied he had the matrimonial agent arrested, and Mr. Justice Grantham, always a terror to blackmailers, considered it would be in the interests of the country if Martin spent twelve years in penal servitude.

For sheer impudence nothing can beat the *coup* brought off by a gang of racecourse sharps in the early 'nineties. They actually invented a race meeting in the South of England, telegraphing on an August Bank Holiday, when there are always several meetings held, to a London sporting daily the "results," giving each race, horse, jockey, weight, trainer, and starting-price. They had, of course, on the morning of the "races" backed the "winners" with certain well-known starting-price bookmakers, all of whom paid on the prices returned by the sporting journal referred to, and the rogues got away with the spoils long before their fraud was discovered.

The rogue who practises a swindle which makes his victims partners in his crime is generally safe because it is in the interest of those he has defrauded to keep him out of the dock, but it requires unusual ingenuity to invent a scheme which will answer that purpose. Some years ago there was an action tried in Ireland arising out of the following unique circumstances. In a certain town there was a prosperous butcher whose respectability was unquestioned and whose character stood high in the community. To him came an acquaintance who whispered that he had evolved a marvellous apparatus which, with a simplicity bordering on the miraculous, manufactured counterfeit coin that could not be distinguished from the real things by experts. The butcher was frankly incredulous but not

disgusted. The mirage of a profit of several hundreds per cent. was sufficient to deaden his conscience, but he did not intend to part with any of his money until the machine demonstrated its ability in his presence, and under his strict supervision. The inventor expressed himself as only too willing to submit his statements to the severest tests, and accordingly, one night, in the back parlour of the shop, he placed his "machine" on the table—it was made of wood with a zinc lining—and with the butcher watching his every movement he poured some liquid lead into one end and watched it trickle through the canal-like cavity which ran the length of the apparatus. Near the bottom the molten stream passed into a drawer in which it apparently rested, and where, the inventor said, it was formed into circular discs and stamped after the manner of genuine half-crowns. When each coin was perfect it dropped through a sort of trapdoor to the bottom of the machine, and all the fortunate owner of this miniature El Dorado had to do was to wait until it was cool enough to handle. Again and again the inventor demonstrated the wonderful properties of his invention, but even when the butcher was convinced he hesitated to buy a half share for five hundred pounds. The apparatus was very crude and its owner had the reputation of being "warm," and as a commercial man he hesitated to risk his money in the exploitation of the miraculous.

"Look here," said the inventor, displaying wonderful patience and good temper, "take these half crowns to the bank and ask them to change them. They'll soon tell you if they're counterfeit."

The butcher, however, had his character to consider. He was an honest man—as he later affirmed—and he did not intend to be accused of attempting to pass counterfeit coin. When, therefore, he entered the local bank with ten of the half-crowns which he had seen manufactured by his friend's apparatus, to avoid

misunderstandings of a painful nature he bluntly asked the cashier to examine them and give his opinion.

"These are all right," said the bank official with a smile. "There's no need to be afraid of them because they're new. Bring along as many as you like and I'll give you banknotes or gold for their value."

After that the butcher was only too anxious to purchase a half-share in the miracle-worker for five hundred pounds, and when the inventor received the money he handed the apparatus over to his partner for "safe keeping," and departed to his home. A few weeks later there was a stormy interview between the partners, for in the meantime the butcher had discovered how he had been bamboozled. The "inventor" had palmed off on him genuine half-crowns which he had heated and had placed in the cavity of the machine before entering the shop. The molten lead and the rest of the tricks had been all so much bluff for the benefit of the suspicious and dour tradesman. The latter now demanded his money back, but it was refused, and threats to prosecute had no effect beyond exciting derisive laughter from the "inventor," who pointed out that the butcher had conspired with him to defraud the State. Nevertheless, the butcher brought an action in the civil courts, and after much merriment had been excited by counsel for the defendant, who made the most of the material for humorous sallies placed at his disposal by his client, the judge ruled that as it had been a partnership instituted with the object of perpetrating a fraud neither party to it could expect the State to protect him. The plaintiff was thereupon non-suited.

There was also some humour, but of a grimmer variety, in the trick a couple of Frenchmen exploited in rural France and Germany thirty years ago. Posing as doctors they toured the villages, discreetly announcing that they were prepared to maim temporarily any young man about to be called to the colours who did

not wish to be passed for service. They guaranteed to return six months later and for the balance of their fee restore to perfect health the rejected conscript, and the credulous peasants paid fifty francs down, or, in the case of Germans, two hundred marks, submitted to the "operation," which was generally the breaking of a bone of the trigger-finger of the right hand, and endured the pain with stoicism, believing that a few months after they had been rejected by the Army doctors their benefactors would re-appear and put them right again. Their simple faith was confirmed by the fact that each of them had promised to pay another fee for the cure. But, of course, the so-called doctors never came back and the fools were crippled for life. Some of them had been lamed and several deaths resulted from the clumsiness of the scoundrels, but they were never captured, although several of their imitators later on were.

Another tour of a couple of rogues must be recorded because of its uniqueness. Arriving in India with a trunk-load of impressive-looking parchment certificates, each purporting to be issued by the "Senate of the University of the United States," two Yankees proceeded to sell the degrees of Master of Arts, Doctor of Divinity, Doctor of Laws, and Doctor of Science to those natives who were ambitious of academic honours. As the pedlars were willing to accept any price they could get, it frequently happened that a semi-nude Hindu had the degree of D.D. conferred on him for a couple of rupees, and towards the close of the tour the speculators rewarded efficient hotel servants by making them M.A.'s or D.D.'s on the spot and for nothing. They returned home with a considerable fortune, but if anyone is inclined to laugh at the *naïveté* of the native he had better remember that many whites have been deceived in the same manner. A famous Non-conformist divine styled himself "Dr." for many years until a lawsuit revealed the interesting fact that the



"university" which had conferred it on him had never known any alumni except five small negro orphans. "See that man," whispered a choleric clergyman during a ceremony at York Cathedral, indicating the reverend gentleman who was reading the lesson for the day, "he's wearing a bogus hood-- he's a living lie." "Hush," said his companion, Magee, the famous Archbishop, as if gently depreciating such strong language; "say, rather, a falsehood."

But selling Latin "tags" inscribed on parchment to the heathen is easy work compared with selling to a presumably cute trader what is already his own property. Now and again a busy second-hand bookseller is imposed upon by a plausible rascal, who picks up a volume from the outside stall and sells it inside the shop for a few shillings to its owner. There is a story to the effect that one of these thieves took a rare first edition from the doorway shelf of a shop and obtained fifteen pounds for it. This was a *tour de force*, but the rogue's glib tongue worked the trick successfully. The same volume had been priced twenty pounds, and the amateur dealer insisted on receiving his price when the bookseller had offered him ten pounds.

"I have another copy of that edition and I'm asking only twenty for it," he pointed out.

"Quite so," said the stranger, promptly, "but I examined your copy a moment ago and it is not in such fine condition as this." He got his fifteen pounds, and when later the fraud was discovered and the ferret-eyed youngster who had been on guard all day outside the shop was asked if he had seen the stranger pick up the rare book he declared he had.

"I watched him," said the youth, "and when after talking to you for several minutes he came out without it, I thought you had refused an offer from him to buy it."

That criminal certainly had nerve, and there was more skill in his swindle than in all the plans of the

Bidwell Gang, although the latter netted many thousands of pounds by their forgeries of letters of credit. As a rule, however, the bigger the crime the less original it is. Great crimes are usually the result of hard work and organisation. They collapse and are detected when the participants grow careless or lose their heads. I remember a trial at the Old Bailey which concerned the leader of a band of criminals and their organiser, the latter a doctor. He planned and carried out with the aid of his confederates a score of profitable ventures in crime, and if it had not been for a mistake by one of his subordinates, the doctor would never have appeared in the dock to receive sentence of seven years' penal servitude. He had sent a couple of his men to cash a forged cheque for a large sum on a Leeds bank, and they employed the porter at their hotel to take it to the bank. They followed him at a discreet distance, prepared to fly if he was detained, and when after five long minutes' steady watch on the door of the bank he failed to reappear they decided the forgery had been detected and they took the next train to London. But they were mistaken. The cheque had been cashed at sight and the porter had duly left the bank by another door. Now the confederates had not known that there was a second exit—hence their flight—and when the money was not claimed at the hotel it was handed to the manager, who returned it to the bank, and then, of course, the truth came out, inquiries were made, and the doctor, a veritable Moriarty of crime, was arrested.

## CHAPTER XVIII

THE most remarkable characteristic of the very small proportion of policemen who have turned criminals is their utter inefficiency as evildoers. It might be imagined that the offender accustomed to dealing with law-breakers, conversant with official methods and views, fed daily on theories concerning clues and constantly aided by practical experience, would be a formidable enemy of the community when, for some queer reason, he becomes a member of the class he is paid to hunt. But the reverse is the case, and the most notorious offenders who have served in a police force have been clumsy practitioners who betrayed themselves in thought, word and deed. They have sown their path with clues, and not content with this, have broken all the rules which the average criminal observes for his own sake. Hence it has never been very difficult to convict them, although the most astonishing example of the policeman-criminal was thrice tried for murder before a verdict of guilty was returned. But it may be recorded that Inspector T. H. Montgomery never had any chance of escaping the hangman, and it was only Irish eloquence acting upon the supersensitive minds of a few pedants that compelled the Crown to indict him three times.

Montgomery was a remarkable personality, and there is little doubt that his brain was never normal. He was a bank clerk when he decided to study for the Royal Irish Constabulary, and he duly passed the examinations and received his commission as sub-inspector, being appointed head of the police at Newtownstewart, County Tyrone.

From the beginning of his new career, however, he was in a condition of chronic impecuniosity, and he staved off many a crisis by inducing certain of his subordinates to entrust their savings to him for investment. He used the money thus obtained to pay a proportion of his debts, and he regularly handed the interest to his dupes, trusting to a miracle to make him rich enough one day to return the capital he had embezzled. When the miracle failed to materialize, he resolved to murder his most intimate friend, because that friend was cashier of the local bank, and his death would enable Montgomery to steal some thousands of pounds. In his capacity as District-Inspector he was well known and trusted, if not respected, and the embryonic murderer believed that he would be the last person to be suspected of an atrocious crime. It seemed to favour his chances of ultimate escape that he was the cashier's closest friend, and he thought that if he carried out his plan with boldness and daring he would at one stroke become possessed of a fortune, save himself from dismissal from the force for taking money from his inferiors, and, by judicious use of his resources, put himself in the running for the highest prizes of his profession.

It is not difficult to picture his state of mind at this stage. Ruin was merely a question of time. Desperate men try desperate remedies, and the inspector's brain was a tenebrous tenement seething with evil. For weeks before the murder he was always considering his plans, and in his determination to make his crime a success he was unusually slow and cautious.

Despite his care, however, he was a stupid and a silly criminal from the moment he entered the bank—the manager was away for the day, and the cashier was alone—on June 29th, 1871, and taking William Glass unawares, struck him down from behind with a cleaver weighted with lead, a murderous weapon he had prepared specially, having added the lead to it

himself. Glass died instantly—"He had an easy death of it!"—said Montgomery after his conviction, but the spectacle was a fearful one when the corpse was discovered, the office being splashed with blood and the condition of the body being indescribable. Montgomery hastily rifled the safe, scattering indiscriminately notes and securities he could not carry off; but when he left the bank calm and cool and carrying his weapon concealed under a coat carelessly slung over his arm he had in his pockets fifteen hundred pounds in paper money and about fifty in gold.

The murder was committed in broad daylight, when there were plenty of persons in the street outside, and Montgomery knew that he was running a fearful risk, but, although quite well aware that he would be identified as the last person seen emerging from the bank that day, he relied upon his position and character to divert suspicion from him.

About two hours later he was in the bank again, for the murder had been discovered and, of course, he had been informed at once. Here was the crucial test for Montgomery. His life depended on how he acted. He must have rehearsed the scene often, and yet from the very first he was so unnatural and short-sighted that he could scarcely have incriminated himself more obviously than he did.

"Do you think he committed suicide?" he remarked to an acquaintance, who stood looking down at the butchered cashier. It was in the circumstances such a palpably ridiculous question that the only possible answer was a derisive laugh, and Montgomery, conscious that he had blundered, became officious and ordered everybody out of the place except the constable in charge.

From the bank he went to his office and wrote a message to be telegraphed to his colleague in the neighbouring district. "Please inform coroner that a death under suspicious circumstances has occurred," he

scribbled. "Under suspicious circumstances" was a quaint falsehood in view of the facts, and a little later the murderer seemed to realise that, for he dispatched another message describing Glass's death as due to murder and ordering the usual inquiries to be made.

It would take too long, however, to give in detail his clumsy efforts to hoodwink his *confrères*, but when he asked a brother inspector if it would be possible to secure the conviction of the last man seen to leave the bank premises supposing his clothes were not bloodstained, and when it was accidentally ascertained that he had left the bank later than anyone else, he was taken into custody and duly committed for trial. Twice Frank MacDonagh, Q.C., mesmerised a minority of the jury into refusing to agree to a verdict of guilty, but at the third trial Serjeant Armstrong, who prosecuted, smashed the defence to atoms by producing in court a constable who resembled Montgomery in height and figure. The mute witness was wearing the clothes the prisoner had worn when he committed the crime, on his arm was the identical coat, in his pockets the bloodstained notes—which had been recovered from their place of concealment in a wood—and in his trousers-pocket the weapon with which Glass had been killed. The constable moved up and down in front of the jury, and then slowly proceeded to place on the table the coat, notes, gold and hatchet, thus proving that it was possible for Montgomery to have walked away from the bank with the money and the cleaver in his possession without unduly attracting attention. The demonstration was sufficient for the jury, and the prisoner was convicted. Within a couple of minutes of the announcement of the verdict he confessed in open court that he had murdered his friend, William Glass, but the plea that he was insane did not save Montgomery from the gallows.

Equally strange and dramatic, though on an entirely different plane, and amid an environment practi-

cally unknown in Great Britain, was the crime of Lieutenant Charles Becker, of the New York Police. Becker was in charge of the department which dealt with the suppression of gambling saloons, and, finding his pay inadequate, he instituted a system of blackmail by means of which he extracted nearly two million dollars from professional gamblers and saloon-keepers in the city. Of course, he did not keep all this for himself, but he retained the larger portion, and he was a rich man when he committed murder by deputy. It happened that there was one of those periodical outbursts against police maladministration in the United States, and a committee of inquiry was formed, and amongst the volunteer witnesses was Hermann Rosenthal, who had grown tired of handing over most of his profits to Lieutenant Becker. When the latter heard of what he called Rosenthal's treachery, he ordered a gang of gunman to shoot him, and on July 16th, 1912, Rosenthal was murdered by the police officer's hirelings. Now it will be admitted that for a policeman to put himself in the power of professional criminals was tantamount to suicide. Becker must have been conversant with the modern proverb that there is no honour amongst wrongdoers, but he took the risk and paid the usual penalty, for when the leader of the gang was captured, two members of it disclosed the whole conspiracy, and the result was that Lieutenant Becker was arrested and charged with the murder.

For three years he fought for his life, money, influence and some luck enabling him to delay the executioner, but in July, 1915, he was electrocuted, and a foolish criminal met with the fate that crime and stupidity bring in their trail.

But the police officer who places himself at the mercy of a crook is not confined to the United States, and although their offence was not so serious, the fall of the three Scotland Yard detectives was as dramatic

and as sensational as Becker's. That master of the ironic in the human comedy, Thomas Hardy, could not have imagined a scene which took place at the headquarters of the London police in the summer of 1877, when three chief-inspectors, busy in their offices examining the papers relating to crimes which they had been ordered to investigate, were suddenly informed that they were under arrest, and that the charge was accepting money from the notorious Benson gang to aid them to defeat the ends of justice. What must have been the feelings of men who had given the best years of their lives to the service of the State when in one moment they were turned from the captors into the captured? Their despair must have been all the greater because they had sacrificed so much for so little.

Of the three men—John Meiklejohn, William Palmer and Nathaniel Druscovich—the last-named was the most interesting personality and the cleverest detective. A Pole who had become a naturalized Englishman, Druscovich was a brilliant linguist, a persevering and invariably successful tracker of criminals and highly respected at Scotland Yard, where he was marked out for further promotion. His special department dealt with foreign crooks, and he was constantly travelling between London and the Continent. Meiklejohn was a Scotsman of considerable ability, and Palmer had attained a chief-inspectorship by long service and good conduct. Had it not been for the Scotsman, however, his two colleagues would never have been tempted, and they owed their introduction to the Benson gang to Meiklejohn, who came from the Bridge of Allan, where he had become very friendly with William Kurr, a well-educated man who had exchanged the sober atmosphere of a railway clerkship for the more adventurous life of a bookmaker.

In course of time Kurr fell in with Harry Benson, one of the most remarkable criminals of the nineteenth



century, a perverted genius with a sense of humour and no sense of honour. He invented the celebrated Turf Fraud, by means of which he and his confederates, William Kurr, Frederick Kurr, Bale and Murray, swindled a French lady, the Comtesse de Goncourt, out of nearly ten thousand pounds. But aware of the precarious nature of his "profession," Benson decided that advantage ought to be taken of William Kurr's intimacy with Chief-Inspector Meiklejohn to insure against misfortune, and, accordingly, he planned to bribe the detective and as many of his colleagues at the Yard as could be induced to surrender their independence. Fortune helped him to succeed, for it happened that Meiklejohn, who had already accepted "presents" and "loans" from Kurr, was informed by Chief-Inspector Druscovich that he was in financial difficulties. It appeared that Druscovich had backed a bill for a near relation for one hundred and fifty pounds, and that the bill had been dishonoured. In plain language, that meant that the Chief-Inspector was in debt, and that if his superiors at Scotland Yard got to hear of it he would be dismissed.

Meiklejohn by this time had frankly entered Benson's "secret service," and had agreed to give the crook private information of any designs on the part of the detective department against him, and when Druscovich mentioned his worries, he was immediately introduced to Benson, who "lent" him sixty pounds and generously intimated that he need never hesitate to ask for more if he wanted further assistance. A little later Chief-Inspector Palmer was drawn into the conspiracy, and then Benson and his colleagues put their well-prepared scheme into practice, convinced that with three chief-inspectors at Scotland Yard to warn them if any of their victims complained, they would be able to escape arrest and get away with their spoils.

The swindle prospered for a space, and Benson was

able to call himself Count Yonge and cut capers in Shanklin society, but when Mme. de Goncourt accidentally discovered that she was being duped, and came to London and laid her grievances before the Lord Mayor, the game was up, and the gang had to scatter and vanish. It was now time for the three bribed detectives to render services for payment received, and, doubtless realising that the arrest of the Benson gang would also ruin them, they did their best to prevent Scotland Yard from identifying "Mr. Montgomery," the name Benson had passed under when dealing with the French countess and other dupes, and tracing his confederates. When Druscovich was told to proceed to the Isle of Wight to arrest Benson—by some means unknown to the suborned detectives the identities of all the swindlers had been ascertained—he sent a telegram warning him, and when his instructions to go to Shanklin were cancelled and he was ordered to take the next train to Bridge of Allan and arrest Kurr, another telegram was dispatched to the latter preparing him for eventualities. Palmer and Meiklejohn were not idle either, and, in the circumstances, it is not surprising that no arrests were effected and that the chiefs at Scotland Yard were puzzled and astounded at the mysterious manner in which office secrets leaked out. None of the detectives were suspected, and the general failure to capture Benson, the Kurrs, Murray and Bale were ascribed to bad luck.

A mere accident brought things to a head. Superintendent Williamson received information that William Kurr was living in hiding in a certain house in London, and he had a warrant prepared at once for his arrest. This he would have entrusted to Druscovich had he been at hand, but as the chief-inspector was somewhere in the country it was given to a detective of the name of Littlechild, who later was to achieve fame as a shining light of the Criminal Investigation Department. Littlechild went at once to the address

mentioned in the warrant, captured William Kurr, searched the house and discovered certain papers which revealed the highly interesting fact that Benson, Frederick Kurr and Bale were in Rotterdam, where Benson was passing under the name of George Washington Morton.

Williamson immediately sent for Druscovich, Scotland Yard's linguist and continental expert, and ordered him to proceed to Rotterdam with warrants for the arrest of all three men. The superintendent added that he would journey there too, but that his special business would be to obtain the extradition of the three rogues.

Here was another dramatic situation and one denied to the dramatist and the novelist, because so wildly improbable. When Druscovich came face to face with Benson and the others, all he could do was to whisper that he was acting under the eye of his superior, and that he had really done his best to save his paymaster and could do no more. An attempt to secure their premature release by a forged telegram sent by a solicitor to the Rotterdam police and purporting to be signed by Superintendent Williamson having failed, the swindlers were conducted to London and placed in cells.

Their trial lasted many days, and resulted in Benson getting fifteen years' penal servitude, the Kurrs and Bale ten years each, and Murray, a minor member of the gang, eighteen months' hard labour. So the league of rogues passed into prison, and Druscovich, Meiklejohn and Palmer returned to their duties at Scotland Yard doubtless praying that the convicts would not betray them. But Benson and Co. had no intention of allowing their confederates to escape, and they "gave the show away" within a few weeks, and the three detectives were arrested at Scotland Yard, and after a prolonged hearing at Bow Street were committed for trial at the Old Bailey, where they subsequently spent twenty days in the dock. As is usual with the policeman-

criminal, the accused had provided the prosecution with ample evidence of their guilt. Druscovich had usually telegraphed to Meiklejohn when he wished to ask a question or impart information, and Palmer and the others had been equally incautious until they had done enough to render the task of the prosecution the easiest imaginable. All the telegrams were produced and also many of the bank-notes received from Benson, and the prolixity of the proceedings was due entirely to the desire of the Government to expose the whole system and to prove everything independently of the statements of Benson and the Kurrs, who gave evidence against the inspectors.

The jury returned a verdict of guilty, and each of the accused received two years' hard labour. A similar term was meted out to Froggatt, the solicitor who had sent the forged telegram to Rotterdam, whilst a fourth Scotland Yard officer was acquitted.

When, in course of time, Benson was released, he went to New York and perpetrated an ingenious swindle there. Dressed in the height of fashion, he managed to be the first aboard Mme. Patti's ship when it entered the harbour, and when he accosted the famous *prima donna* with a courtly bow, she, thinking he was the representative of the New York reception committee, took his arm and allowed him to lead her towards the genuine deputation when it appeared. The latter, beholding Benson arm in arm with the renowned singer, imagined he was her secretary or manager or intimate friend, and allotted him a prominent position at the subsequent public ceremony of welcome. Benson took advantage of his luck to forge tickets for a Patti concert, but he was detected and arrested, and while awaiting trial in the Tombs Prison he committed suicide by throwing himself from the top tier to the stone pavement below.

Major Frederick Beswick, Chief Constable of Birkenhead, who was sentenced to five years' penal

servitude for forgery in 1869, was a soldier with an honourable record, whose downfall was due to living beyond his means. He was already involved when given the responsible post at Birkenhead, and when the forgeries by means of which he had disposed of certain stock belonging to a lady whose trustee he was were discovered, he endeavoured to use his official position to stave off ruin. His fellow-trustee came to him one day with a description of the person who had sold the stock and who was suspected of being the forger, and Major Beswick, recognising the description as a poor one of himself, had it printed and circulated in the town of which he was chief constable ! But it did not require any great skill to bring home his guilt to him, and he was arrested, and the head of the Birkenhead police was sent to penal servitude, eloquence and influence failing to save him.

When Mullins murdered Mrs. Elmsley, of Stepney, sixty years ago, he was not a policeman, having left the force some time previously, and he is not to be classed with the policeman-criminal ; but the crime of Constable Cooke, of the London force, who slew Maud Merton in 1893, cannot go unrecorded. It was an instance of a romance developing into a sordid tragedy, for Cooke was a young and handsome policeman patrolling a street in the West End of London when he met Maud Merton and tried to save her from herself. Maud was young, pretty and temperamental, and Cooke fell in love with her, and, believing that she would go straight, he linked his fortunes with hers, looking forward to the day when he could marry her. But Maud soon grew tired of respectability, and when the constable ascertained the precise nature of the efforts she made to banish boredom, he informed her that they would have to be strangers in future. The girl, however, was not to be got rid of, and when Cooke persisted in holding aloof from her, she complained about him to the superintendent at Bow Street, who,

declining to be influenced by romance, transferred Cooke to the Notting Hill Division and fined him a month's pay.

This was Maud Merton's revenge; and she ought to have been satisfied with it, but logic was not her strong point, and she could see no reason why Cooke should not love her. It is easy to anticipate what followed, especially when the triangle was completed by the appearance of another woman, and Maud's fury became devilish. She forced an interview with Cooke, and confronting him when he was alone on his beat in the shadow of Wormwood Scrubs Prison, she screamed threats and insults until the man, losing control of himself, raised his truncheon and beat her to death. That was at about eleven at night, and seven hours later the body was discovered. The murderer had, in the meantime, buried his bloodstained truncheon in the back garden of the house where he lodged, and when he was suspected and arrested, the first act of the detective in charge of the case was to dig up the back garden and recover the most damaging piece of evidence against the accused. Cooke, however, confessed fully before he was committed for trial, and he quietly and submissively went to his death, while a howling mob outside Newgate caricatured human nature and ridiculed civilisation by rejoicing publicly over the doom of a man who might have made a success of life had he not been cursed with a romantic disposition.

A few months ago a sergeant and a constable of the London Metropolitan Police were sent to penal servitude for burglary, a rare crime amongst men in their calling, though the weakminded must be tempted by their special knowledge of well-furnished houses on their beat which are unoccupied during the holiday season. Several officers have been convicted of perjury, but generally the motive has been to back up a weak case, and not to make money or to injure an enemy.

The founder of the first regular detective force was a notorious criminal, and when Eugene Vidocq was

chosen by the Paris Chief of Police to organise a band of detectives for the protection of life and property and the capture of offenders, he naturally enough decided that the most efficient method would be to set thieves to catch thieves. As a result he gathered round him the scum of the French underworld, and the zealous "detectives," anxious for "results" acted as *agents-provocateurs*, and when they failed as tempters, denounced innocent persons and were never without funds, because the chief paid by results, and there was a fee for each arrest. It was a loathsome system which speedily killed itself, yet when Canler, who came after Vidocq, began to reform the force and eliminate the criminal element, he was subjected to much abusive criticism.

The Vidocq method had been out of favour in England since the time of Jonathan Wild, but when the Frenchman was flourishing there was a London police officer, George Vaughan, who arranged numerous "burglaries" with confederates and induced youthful crooks to break into selected houses. The burglars were ignorant of Vaughan's identity, and when the redoubtable sleuth appeared on the scene at the psychological moment and captured them, they did not suspect that he had been the influence that had tempted them to disaster. However, Vaughan overdid his villainy, was discovered and transported for life.

Germany and Austria have had the policeman-criminal in their midst, and generally he has been a high official. In 1913 three Berlin detectives were convicted of blackmail, and in 1914 the Police President of Cologne retired from office hurriedly to avoid prosecution for a serious offence. The German authorities have generally shrunk from exposing the delinquencies of their police, and retirement has been regarded as a sufficient punishment for breaches of the law. Of course, savagely assaulting civilians was never considered a crime, and the sergeant of police who in 1914 cut off

a man's hand from the wrist without having received the slightest provocation was not even censured. Vienna and Budapest also have been compelled to deal with policemen who have fallen from grace.

There is no need to dwell on the iniquities of the old Russian police, who were infamous for criminality. They practically standardised bribery, regulation fees being payable to all from the highest to the lowest, the easy-going Slav regarding bribery as almost a legitimate tax and scarcely objecting to it. But what he did resent was the cold brutality of the secret police, the manufacturing of criminals by detectives and the tortures inflicted in prisons where the police held sway and acknowledged no superior authority. The Russian Secret Police helped unwittingly to bring about the revolution, and it is not surprising that thousands of them enlisted in the service of the Bolsheviks, for cruelty knows no boundaries or principles.

Looking back on the last hundred years and taking into consideration the type of man who has formed the backbone of the British police forces and the wages paid, it can be said that the public have no reason to complain of their bargain. When Sir Robert Peel established the Metropolitan Police Force in 1829 he fixed the pay of constables at twenty-one shillings a week, and in a letter to Croker, who had suggested five shillings a day, he declared that the weekly guinea was sufficient. "No doubt three shillings a day will not give me all the virtues under heaven, but I do not want them," he wrote. "Angels would be far above my work." It is this question of pay which has been at the bottom of most of the trouble, however, and the wonder is that more policemen have not succumbed to the monetary inducements held out to them by criminals. Until recently the police were scandalously underpaid, and it is to their credit that so few of them have betrayed their trust.



## CHAPTER XIX

LONDON society was sorry when Daniel Sickles and his wife returned to the United States. During the time he had been one of the secretaries at the American Embassy he had been very popular, for Sickles was good-humoured and witty, and seemed certain to carve out a great career for himself. Yet, as he willingly admitted, he owed most of his success to his wife. Although she had been married four years, Mrs. Sickles was only twenty, and her beauty was something to turn a man's head. Born in Italy, she was a typical daughter of the "warm south," and her glorious black eyes, pure oval face, rose-bud mouth and slim figure combined with a delicious accent carried all before them. She was on the small side, very dainty and fragile, and she appeared to be devoted to her strong and handsome husband, who was certainly very proud of her.

No one who saw them together could have foreseen the tragic events of three years later. Teresa constantly praised her husband's goodness to her, and there was no doubt that his ambitions were founded on a desire to make her prouder of him. He was just the man to protect her, provide her with a good social position and keep the sin, suffering and sorrow of this world far from her. "They are an ideal pair," was the frequent comment, and when it was announced that Sickles had decided to go back to America to resume his practice at the Bar regret was general. But Sickles had no liking for diplomatic work. He had already been in Congress and he wished to re-enter political life. So they paid a round of farewell visits and then set sail for home.

Teresa was unfeignedly glad to see America again, and almost immediately her husband was re-elected to Congress. They bought a house in Washington and settled down amongst innumerable friends.

He made amazing progress at the Bar, and he found his beautiful wife of the greatest use to him. She looked superb as she presided over a dinner-party, and many a rich client was first attracted to Sickles' office by meeting Mrs. Sickles in her house. Everyone was struck by her affection for her husband and envied Sickles his luck. "The happiest and most contented pair in Washington" was a common saying, and it was true enough until that unlucky day when the rising barrister and politician brought home to dinner Philip Barton Key, the District Attorney for Columbia, a position corresponding to our Attorney-General. Key was, by virtue of his office, leader of the Washington Bar, and a man of great influence. He certainly filled the part, standing over six feet, with an athletic form and a strong if ugly face. His eyes were deep-set and threatening, and his lower lip slightly twisted. He had the arms of a gorilla, and was just the type to hypnotise any woman who idealised brute strength.

Sickles and Key had first met in an important libel case, and Sickles had won, and when his formidable opponent came to him after the rising of the court and congratulated him he was the proudest man in Washington. Key was the leader of the Bar and his praise was as good as a first class certificate of merit. It was with some hesitancy he asked Key to dine informally that evening.

"My wife will be ready," he said, with a laugh, "she has got accustomed by now to my bringing friends in unexpectedly."

It happened that Key had no engagement that night, and he consented, and, side by side with Sickles, he strode through the streets, his imposing figure exciting considerable attention. Sickles was proud of being

seen with him, for Key was particular as to his company.

A few minutes later Teresa, exquisitely dressed and with a bright flower relieving the ebony blackness of her hair, advanced to shake hands with Philip Barton Key.

"I have often heard of you," Mr. Key," she said, in a low, musical voice, "and it is very kind of you to honour us with your society."

"The honour is mine, that's sure enough," said the District Attorney, scrutinising her boldly. "I didn't know it though until this moment." She averted her face, and the next moment Sickles was making a joke which enabled Teresa to recover her composure.

Sickles always said that it was Teresa who got him his clients, and he was fond of dwelling upon her marvellous tact. "She makes every guest believe that she didn't begin to live until she met him," he said, with an approving laugh that was nearly a roar. "I'll back her for tact against any other woman in the world."

And because Philip Key was a very influential man and able to help her husband considerably in his career, Teresa was particularly nice to him that night at dinner. Several times Sickles smiled knowingly as he saw his beautiful wife's flushed cheeks quite close to Key in order not to miss some witticism. Perhaps the joke was a poor one, but Teresa's appreciation was none the less keen. Key enjoyed himself. The wife of his friend was a revelation to him. Her beauty and her conversation were fascinating, and for the first time in his life he sighed regretfully when it was time for him to drive to his own lonely home.

When he had gone Sickles took Teresa in his arms and kissed her gratefully. "You were magnificent," he said, in a rapture, "you have made Key my friend. Now I am certain of success. One of these days, Teresa, I will be a member of the Senate and, perhaps,

president. Men with half my ability have achieved that, and so why shouldn't I?"

She nestled her face against his chest but did not speak, and Sickles was too full of his own ambitions to notice that she never answered him. Hitherto she had been accustomed to animatedly discuss their guests after they had gone and gleefully confessing to having flattered them shamelessly just for his sake.

But the tragic truth was that when Teresa had looked for a fraction of a second into the strong, brutal face of Philip Barton Key she had lost her soul. A tremor had passed over her and she had instinctively realised that she would never forget him. Her exact reason for this she could not tell. Key was not handsome and he was not as clever as her husband, but to Teresa he was an unforgettable personality, and she trembled at her own thoughts of him.

While Sickles was praising her for the trouble she had taken her conscience was whispering that she had done it all spontaneously because Key had, by a single look, captured her imagination. The flush on her cheeks and the light in her eyes had not been assumed. Both were real and both were evidence of the terrible change that a single evening had wrought in her.

In the morning Sickles went off to his office as usual, leaving Teresa, apparently, as happy as ever. But it was a different Teresa. Twenty-four hours previously she had kissed her husband good-bye and had gone about her wifely and social duties with a zest akin to enthusiasm. But now the house seemed terribly dull and the problem of having to pass the day without Philip Barton Key sickened her. She did not look forward to her husband's return for lunch. Life had suddenly become impossible, irksome and irritating, because she could not always be with the man she loved.

Teresa had never felt bored before in her life. Her husband's wit and her intense interest in his doings

had made the days seem only too short. Now she was restless and dissatisfied, and she was guiltily conscious that she would not be happy until she had seen Key again.

Meanwhile, Daniel Sickles was working hard, thinking all the time of his loving and devoted wife. When he went into court and nodded to Key and his other friends he was the beau ideal of the confident, prosperous lawyer. There was no doubt now of his success. Already his contemporaries were naming him as Key's successor when the latter's term of office expired.

When he returned to the house that night Teresa seemed the same as usual. For once there were no guests, and Sickles was not sorry. Over their coffee his wife mentioned casually that Key had called during the afternoon.

"I almost forgot to tell you," she said, lightly, feeling confident because her face was in the shadow. "It was, of course, a courtesy visit to thank me for our hospitality last night."

"I think Key likes us," said Sickles, a little piqued at his wife's lack of interest in the District Attorney. "I want you to be always very nice to him. He can do a lot for us."

"But he is so ugly," she pouted, and made a grimace.

"That may be," said Sickles, with energy, "but he's a decent fellow and he is very popular. I hope he'll come again soon."

Teresa was only playing with him. She was acting a part and acting it so well that he was completely deceived. For that second visit had completed the astounding change in her, and she had realised and had admitted to herself that she loved Philip Barton Key, loved his massive strength, grand figure and above all his ugliness. It was an ugliness that attracted and repelled at the same time, and little Teresa Sickles, as dainty as a flower, began to weave fairy-stories about herself and Key, and Daniel Sickles had no part in them.

They dined one evening with Key, and later, he invited them to tea, but Sickles was unable to appear at the latter function because he was engaged in a heavy case. Teresa had to go alone, and she explained to her husband afterwards that she had tried not to look uninterested. She did not tell him that the "tea-party" had taken the form of a drive into the country in Key's dog-cart and that in a lonely glen they had suddenly thrown aside their reserve and had confessed that they would sacrifice the world to their sudden and amazing love.

Key was willing to give up his all for her. He had wealth, position and fame, but he was eager to surrender them all if by doing so he could get Teresa for himself. For her part she had her reputation and her place in the most exclusive Washington society; she had the love of a clever man and the prospect of seeing him rise to the highest position in the service of his country, but now they were as nothing to her compared with her mad love for the District Attorney. Without him life would be intolerable, and kind as Sickles might be, she could not see him without experiencing a desire to scream.

Presently people began to talk. It was noticed that Key neglected his duties and that he had contracted a habit of calling at the Sickles' house when the husband was absent. As is usual in these cases, Sickles was the very last man to become aware of what his friends were saying about him and Teresa. It did not arouse his suspicions when Key asked him to conduct a prosecution for him, pleading ill-health as his reason for not appearing in court. Sickles gladly agreed, and whilst he was haranguing a jury, Key and Teresa were enjoying themselves in the country. Everybody wondered at Sickles' blindness, but even when a daring friend broadly hinted at the state of affairs the injured husband merely smiled knowingly.

"They do not know that Teresa is doing it all for

me," he said to himself, as he walked homewards. "One day they will be told the truth and then they will realise that what I am my devoted wife has made me."

He was still pursuing this train of thought when he entered his house. To his surprise Teresa was not there to greet him, and the fact disturbed him, for he could not recall it happening before. However, she was not five minutes late, and her explanation of forgetting the time talking to her loquacious friend, Mrs. Henriques, was accepted.

Teresa was in brilliant form that night at dinner, and the half dozen guests were almost persuaded to admit to themselves that they had misjudged her. She was very tender to her husband and that she was intensely happy was obvious. A guilty woman could not have typified marital happiness as she did. Sickles' pride in her had an element of the pathetic in it, and when his guests were taking their leave they hoped that they were wrong and that the scandalous rumours which were agitating Washington society were cruelly unjust to Teresa Sickles.

After his friends had gone and Teresa had, with a laughing expression of body-weariness, run upstairs, Sickles remained in the drawing room thinking. He had had a tiring day, but he was not exhausted. Teresa's fascinating loveliness always refreshed him, and now he lingered awhile to dwell on her charm and her devotion to him.

With a start he realised that he had been there nearly two hours, but he did not notice that Teresa had not called out to him. Before Philip Barton Key had entered their house she had always come down to remind him that he was keeping her awake. He paused on the first landing as he remembered that he had promised to bring a certain law-book with him into court next morning, and he now entered the library to take it down from the shelf and place it in a position

where he would be sure to see it. It was easy enough to get the volume, and as he turned to put it on the table he saw a letter addressed to himself.

It had not come through the post and how it had got there was a mystery, because the butler always handed him his correspondence. Thinking of these things, Sickles opened the envelope and read the anonymous statements it contained half a dozen times in swift succession.

When, at last, it slipped from between his nerveless fingers his face was ashen grey, for the letter made the most terrible accusations against his wife. "Mrs. Sickles meets Key every day at a house in Fifteenth Street. It is kept by a negro, and your wife always knows when Key is there because the agreed signal is a piece of black string suspended from the second storey front window." There was a great deal more, but it was the assurance of the writer and the mass of detail he gave that turned the lawyer's soul sick within him. Yet he would not believe it. In a hoarse voice he cried aloud that it was an invention of the devil, and when he came to his bedroom and saw Teresa asleep with her rosy lips slightly parted—forming a perfect picture—he endeavoured once again to banish his thoughts from him.

They kept him awake, however, all night, and in the morning he was haggard and looked five years older. It cut him to the quick that Teresa never remarked upon his appearance. There had been a time when she had noticed every change and when her anxiety, even when founded on mere imagination, had been delightful and touching.

When he kissed her good-bye his heart beat tempestuously as he realised that her kiss was cold. It was no use trying to assure himself that it was only morbid fancy on his part. He knew that while her lips touched his cheek her thoughts were far away.



In his office he wrestled with the problem again, but his suspicions grew in spite of himself. He wanted to watch the house in Fifteenth Street, of which his anonymous correspondent had warned him, but his natural chivalry prevented him.

Suddenly he turned to his clerk.

"Find out who rents the house at the far right hand corner of Fifteenth Street," he said, and tried to immerse himself in a new case. The clerk was back inside an hour.

"The tenant is Mr. Key," he said, simply, unaware that his remark was the preliminary to a terrible tragedy.

Sickles sprang from his chair and without troubling to pick up his hat rushed out of his office. In record time he was at home. As he came in Teresa was coming out. He had seen her carriage waiting for her.

"You are not going for a drive," he said, curtly, "come with me to the library. I want to speak to you."

She had to clutch the banister rail to steady herself, but somehow the guilty woman, though terror was tearing at her heart, managed to get into the library. Her eyes betrayed her fears, but she still retained the childlike beauty and innocence that had hypnotised Daniel Sickles less than six years previously.

It was an unequal combat, and Teresa, even if her infatuation for Key had made her cunning, was no match for the astute cross-examiner who was her husband. For a time she battled, protesting fiercely that she did not know the house in Fifteenth Street and that Key was merely a friend, but Sickles piled pitiless question upon question until she had contradicted herself a score of times. Then at last she sank to the floor with her hands covering her face so that he might not see her scarlet cheeks.

"It is true," she faltered, "I will confess."

The confession was a remarkable document. In it Teresa laid bare her soul, and her story was a terrible

**one.** She told how Key had hypnotised her from the moment of their first meeting and how he had played upon her feelings until she had been unable to deny him anything.

"Give me back your wedding ring," said Sickles, hoarsely. "Now write to your mother and tell her to come and take you away. Do so before I forget that I loved you once."

She did not ask for forgiveness and, strangest of all, neither did she fly to Key. In her hour of despair and defeat she did not think of her lover. Perhaps, it was the knowledge that, despite her fall, her husband still loved her that induced her not to seek safety in Key's house.

The matter was kept very quiet for three days. When Mrs. Sickles left for her mother's home no one expressed surprise, and if Sickles was not seen in court it was known that he was busy in his office. The gossips continued to debate amongst themselves when the injured husband would learn the truth, ignorant of the fact that he knew more than anyone now.

The three days passed, and one more Sunday morning dawned. Daniel Sickles was alone in the mansion which he had bought for his wife, and as he sat in the spacious library reviewing the wreckage of his life, passionate anger against the man who had destroyed his happiness seized him. He rose and took a loaded revolver out of his desk and went out into the street.

He was aware that Key was a late riser and that even now, although it was eleven o'clock, he would probably be still in bed, and he was asking himself how he could manage to gain access to him, when in turning a corner he came face to face with the very man.

They stared at one another with the fierce curiosity of men who know that they are mortal enemies, and Key saw something in Sickles' eyes that told him he was in danger. But before he could draw to protect himself Sickles had covered him with his revolver.

"Key, you scoundrel!" he cried, with hoarse emotion. "You have dishonoured my house and you must die." Then he emptied his weapon into the District Attorney's body, and Key collapsed in the roadway.

Strangers carried him into a club opposite, but he soon expired, and when the news of his death came to the police office Sickles was already there, pale but calmly confessing that he had done the deed.

The murder threw Washington into a ferment. Both men had been well known in social, legal and political circles. Both had many influential friends, and for weeks Washington had been in a condition of nervous apprehension caused by the intrigue Key had been carrying on with Teresa Sickles. Now that the inevitable tragedy had taken place everybody was stunned. Then tongues were loosened and nothing else was talked about.

Sickles was, of course, immediately placed under arrest, and it became known that the murdered man's friends intended to exert themselves to the utmost to bring about his conviction and execution. On the other hand the prisoner had scores of important well-wishers, and they turned up in large numbers at the Washington Criminal Court when the case came on.

There have been many sensational trials in America, but the ordeal of Daniel Sickles created a record which has never been equalled. His social standing and that of his victim, the beauty of his wife and the fact that the president himself was keenly interested in the result, tended to endow the affair with an international importance, and for twenty days the team of <sup>renowned</sup> lawyers on either side struggled desperately, while Sickles was the only calm person in court.

In order to make sure that in the event of <sup>f</sup> conviction his friends would not succeed in rescuing him, he was placed in a specially-constructed dock, which was in reality an iron cage. The authorities had received information that the Sickles' party, as his supporters

were termed, had sworn an oath that if the jury did not acquit him they would forcibly release him. A large force of police, fully armed, were in attendance, and the courthouse was packed with suffocating humanity.

Would he win? There had been a time when Sickles would have been thankful for death, but now he was animated by a strong desire for life. He was not yet forty, and his deed had raised him high in the estimation of his fellows, and he knew that an acquittal would be only the beginning of greater prosperity. We cannot guess his thoughts regarding his wife. From the time of the murder until she appeared in court and with bowed head confirmed her confession to her husband she vanished from the sight of men and women. Every important American newspaper sent eager and clever young journalists to find her, and not one of them succeeded.

The prisoner's leading lawyer, Stanton, made a magnificent speech for him. It occupied two days in delivery, but from first to last held the breathless attention of a critical audience. He appealed to the jury to acquit his client and thereby strike the fear of death into every "home-breaker" in the States. He painted Key's character in the blackest colours, and he drew tears from the eyes of his hearers when he depicted Sickles' happy marriage, his pride in his wife, their triumphant entry into London society and the services he had rendered as a diplomat in the service of the United States, and compared the past with the present. The speech created a remarkable demonstration of approval, and when the Attorney-General replied his remarks were received with impatience.

Twenty days in all were occupied by the case. The members of the jury were tired and irritable when they went to the jury-room to consider their verdict. Despite Stanton's powerful oration there was considerable doubt as to the result. Both sides professed to be confident, but their anxiety was obvious. The longest

hour in Sickles' life went by, and ten minutes later the jury returned. Nothing was to be read in the face of the foreman as he rose to deliver the verdict.

"Not guilty," he said, sharply, and a sigh of intense relief came from the court.

Stanton was the first to shake Sickles by the hand, and then he emerged from the cage-dock to receive the congratulations of his friends, who formed a body-guard around him as he left the court. In the streets over a hundred thousand persons were waiting to welcome him, and on Sickles' appearance a scene ensued which is still without parallel.

He was mobbed by his admirers, who nearly killed him by their fervent demonstrations of affection. Hundreds of policemen, mounted and on foot, did their best to save him from the awful pressure. By a superhuman effort they got him to his carriage, but by now the horses had been removed from it, and Sickles was dragged through the streets to his home, from the balcony of which he had to make a speech before they would let him retire. Washington simply went mad over him, and the members of the jury were feted and styled the champions of virtue.

The rest of Sickles' career was in keeping with the dramatic nature of his acquittal. He announced shortly afterwards that he had forgiven his wife, but she did not long survive this act of generosity. Then came the war between North and South, and Sickles obtained the rank of Major-General in the Northern Army. At the Battle of Gettysburg he had the misfortune to lose a leg, and as he was over forty it was expected that he would spend the rest of what life remained to him in retirement.

But those who expected that did not know Daniel Sickles. President Grant appointed him Ambassador to Spain, and his term of service in Madrid was not undistinguished. In Spain he found a second wife, with whom he lived very happily, and on his return to

America he became a Civil Service Commissioner and served a term as Sheriff of New York. A brilliant conversationalist and speaker, he was often seen in society, and with advancing years his fame increased.

Years after the terrible tragedy of his life, men and women who made his acquaintance could hardly credit the brilliant ex-diplomat and lawyer with being the Daniel Sickles who had been the principal actor in one of the most poignant of tragedies. He never referred to his first wife and his twenty days' trial, and that was the only chapter of his long life about which he was silent. He could converse for hours on the heroes of the past—he had met men who had fought in the American War of Independence—but never a word passed his lips of his love-story and the tragic termination of it.

Just three months before the outbreak of the great war an old man died in New York at the age of ninety-three. When the papers announced that he was Daniel Sickles those who had heard of the murder of Philip Barton Key wondered if he could have been the man who avenged his honour that wintry morning in Washington fifty-five years previously. He was, for Daniel Sickles had out-lived all the actors in that famous drama of love and jealousy.

## CHAPTER XX

**DIAMONDS** have a baleful influence on men and women, and it has often been said that sooner or later most persons who come into constant contact with precious stones succumb to their evil power. In the East the pedigree of every famous gem is a catalogue of crime, and in the West there are records of lives broken and disgraced by the lure of the most maleficent of all minerals. A recent example is Antoinette Bonner, a Roumanian girl who was taught by her father how to distinguish the colour and purity of diamonds and who at the age of twenty became a recognised expert in New York, where she gained the confidence of the dealers to such an extent that it was their habit to allow her to take away without paying, jewels to the value of ten thousand pounds, and dispose of them on commission to American ladies who bought only on her advice. It was not unusual for her to disappear for several weeks before returning with the cash for their property, but she was implicitly trusted, although there were veterans in the trade who prophesied that one day she would come under the "baleful influence." For four years Antoinette was known in America as "The Diamond Queen" and it was estimated that she earned at least £5,000 a year. Her honesty was unquestioned and she was respected everywhere, but the day came at last when the gems turned her into a thief; and then the woman who had hitherto resisted temptation obtained £50,000 worth of precious stones and vanished. After a long chase she was arrested in Paris in May, 1914, and the extradition proceedings lasted until the outbreak of the Great War which delayed her trial at

New York with a male confederate. The evidence, however, was considered too weak to justify conviction and they were discharged, the woman pleading that she had not stolen the diamonds but had merely gone to Europe to find purchasers for them, and, as it was impossible to disprove her contention that she had been an agent of the prosecuting firms, she secured her liberty.

This ought to have been a warning, but the "baleful influence" continued, for once a diamond thief always a diamond thief. Although Antoinette was now a marked woman she succeeded in the early part of 1920 in obtaining seventy-five uncut stones from various dealers in New York, but she had scarcely disposed of them when one of the defrauded jewellers put the police on her track and they confronted her in her office. The beautiful Roumanian was prepared for this eventuality, for with a cry of defiance she swallowed a dose of poison and fell dead at their feet. Antoinette Bonner was only twenty-eight at the time of her death.

There have been many female jewel-thieves—indeed, hardly a decade has elapsed since the forties of the last century which has not been marked by their depredations. Emily Lawrence and Louisa Miles were two of the most successful, and yet they found in the long run that crime does not pay.

Louisa Miles was a greater artist in her line than Emily Lawrence. She was a first-class actress, and she changed her appearance with the rapidity of a stage detective. All her notions of rank and fashion were obtained during a brief period of service as housemaid in a West End mansion, and when she launched out on her own as a lady of means and position she proved she had been an apt pupil. Her most remarkable feat would make an excellent comedy. Driving up to the door of a famous Bond Street jeweller's she was escorted from her carriage by a deferential manager, to whom she explained that she was Miss Constance Browne, niece



of Lady Campbell, of Cadogan Place. Her requirements were—for Louisa—modest enough. All she wished was an assistant to be sent to Cadogan Place with diamond necklaces so that her aunt might select a wedding-gift for the daughter of a friend. "Lady Campbell will pay cash," she concluded, carelessly. Louisa's carriage conveyed her back to the house she had taken furnished for three months—she paid one month in advance and she occupied it for only a few hours—and once inside it she became Lady Campbell. When the assistant arrived he was informed that her ladyship was confined to her room and could not see her, and that she requested the jewellery to be sent in to her for examination and selection. To this, however, the young man strongly objected, but "Miss Constance Browne" reappeared and induced him to hand her the collection and wait in the drawing room for her aunt's decision. An hour later he turned the handle of the door only to discover that he was locked in. Then he rushed to the window and tried to raise it, but it was nailed down, and he had to smash the glass and shout for help for some minutes before a policeman forced his way in and released him. Then the duped young man realised that save for himself the house had been uninhabited five minutes after he had given the jewels, worth four thousand pounds, into the hands of the fascinating "Miss Browne." The fair thief, however, was not clever enough to disguise her tracks. She was captured in a railway carriage and at the Old Bailey was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude.

For sheer daring the attempt of an American woman in 1902 to steal a pearl necklace from Christie's during an auction would be hard to beat. Surrounded by experts, she tried to palm off an imitation for the genuine article, which was worth a couple of thousand pounds, but the substitution was instantly detected and she was arrested. A sentence of three years' penal servitude did not convince her that crime is an

unprofitable calling, for after her release she and a crook of the name of Williams lured a jeweller to a flat off the Strand, sandbagged and chloroformed him, and decamped with jewels to the value of eighteen hundred pounds. The tracking down of the culprits was a clever piece of work on the part of three Scotland Yard detectives, and at the Old Bailey she got ten years and her partner fifteen.

There is no doubt that the crook who has the biggest chance of success is the jewel thief. Burglars, forgers, "confidence tricksters" and the rest must create clues for their pursuers in the course of their work. With the specialist in jewellery it is different, and he is further encouraged by the fact that of all stolen goods the receiver will pay the largest sum proportionate to their value for diamonds or pearls. Then again there are many wealthy men in the trade who confine themselves to purchasing jewellery of doubtful origin, and so the thief knows that his money will be safe. At the moment there are half a dozen gangs working in Great Britain and on the Continent, and during the last seven years they have carried off at least a quarter of a million pounds worth of gems, and not in one instance have they met with retribution.

Shortly before his tragic death—he was killed by a bomb dropped from a Zeppelin in September, 1916—I had a chat with Chief Inspector Ward on the subject of jewel robberies. He could speak as one having authority, for he had solved the greatest pearl mystery of the century—the theft of pearls worth £100,000 in 1913. The necklace, carefully packed in a special box and heavily sealed, was dispatched by registered post from Paris to Mr. Max Mayer, Hatton Garden, London, and every precaution was taken to ensure its safe arrival, but when the box was opened in London it was found to contain nothing more valuable than a few pieces of French sugar and part of a French newspaper. When Ward was called in the only clues were the sugar and

the particle of paper, and the problem he had to tackle suggested fiction rather than fact. Sherlock Holmes would have solved it by deducting from the sugar that the thief had long hair and was married to a plumber's widow. The Scotland Yard man, however, worked on more practical lines. It was obvious, he told me, that the pearls had been stolen by experts, and it was easy enough for him to obtain the names of those known to the police. The list was narrowed down by eliminating all those who were either in gaol and others who could not have been in Paris at the time of the robbery, and by these means Ward ultimately arrived at the solution, though a lot of work had to be done after he had definitely decided on the identities of the thieves.

It will be admitted that Ward had a very difficult task, especially as he resolved to recover the necklace as well as arrest the marauders. That was why he allowed the suspects to remain at large for days after he had accumulated sufficient evidence to secure their conviction, and, although he ran a risk in doing so, he was completely justified by events. The theft was, of course, committed in London, where a member of the quartette of crooks succeeded in substituting in the postman's bag a specially-prepared fac-simile of the precious parcel. A motor-car then carried him and a confederate to a certain place, and from there they returned to London, where they were met by the man who had engineered the job and had financed it. That night the trio dined at a West End restaurant, where they were joined by the fourth partner in the enterprise, and at that dinner it was decided that they should keep apart as much as possible. By this time Chief Inspector Ward had not begun to shadow them, but within forty-eight hours the four men were known at Scotland Yard, and they were watched day and night. The thieves, of course, quickly realised that the famous detective was on their track, and the leader promptly

handed over the pearls for safe custody to a friend who had not yet brought himself under the notice of the police. Meanwhile, the thieves devoted themselves to finding a purchaser for the pearls, which on one occasion were produced in a matchbox in a teashop in Holborn and offered to a dark-visaged gentleman of fifty who declared he represented a well-known firm of jewellers. The "dealer" was, in reality, a French detective acting on the instructions of Ward, but as the arrest of the possessor of the pearls might have involved the escape of the other rogues the crook was allowed to leave the teashop unmolested. A few days later, however, Ward came to the conclusion it was time to act. He had discovered that the leader of the gang was planning to leave for America, and the detective with his assistants swooped down on the four men at the entrance to a "tube" station. The detective was not surprised when the pearls were not found on the prisoners, but he assured me that he was quite at his ease because he knew that the missing gems could not get out of England. With the suspects safely under lock and key the public believed that the sensational case was practically finished, but there was another act in the drama and a highly sensational one it was. One morning a piano-tuner on his way to work picked up what he thought was an imitation pearl-necklace but which he had the good sense to give to the officer in charge of the nearest police-station, by whom it was identified as the missing £100,000 necklace. It had been thrown away by the wife of one of the men in custody. Two of the pearls were wanting, but they were recovered, and eventually the whole of the missing property was restored to Mr. Max Mayer, and the thieves were sent to prison.

But the greatest of all jewel thefts was Tom Shaw's raid in December, 1863, on the collection belonging to the Duke of Brunswick. For coolness, resource and daring it is without parallel, and not the least interesting

feature of the *coup* was the astonishing patience of the thief. The duke was an elderly beau of singular depravity who had been turned out of his duchy and who betook himself and his treasures to an ancient mansion in Paris. For many years he had been known as a collector of diamonds and other jewels, and from the moment he arrived in the French capital he took extraordinary precautions to keep at bay those crooks who were, as he well knew, only waiting for a favourable opportunity to rob him, encouraged by the belief that the old ruffian's record was so terrible that he dare not come into court to prosecute anyone. It was also known that some of the most remarkable gems in the duke's possession had been acquired by very dubious methods, and it is not surprising that the professional should regard him as a brother of their craft, even if only an amateur.

From the beginning it was a silent, secret duel between the royal recluse and the corps of cracksmen who were at large in Great Britain and on the Continent, and the duke prepared his defences accordingly. On the second floor of the mansion he had his private suite of three rooms, and these formed his personal fortress. The first and outer one was his study; the second and middle was his bedroom, and the third and inner contained the huge safe in which his gems were kept. Each room led into the other and it was impossible to enter the third without passing through the first and second. All the doors were specially constructed to resist burglars and every one of them had three locks, while the door of the room holding the safe was of wrought iron and stood directly behind the duke's bed, a curtain concealing it day and night. The old miser's pride was the safe. It was a massive affair made to order and cost him an immense sum. He was the only person in the house acquainted with its peculiar mechanism, for it was so constructed that anyone tampering with the door must set certain

electric wires in motion and thereby cause hidden bells to ring loudly and a dozen concealed revolvers to blaze away like a machine-gun. As the duke spent practically the whole of the day in his sitting room and, of course, always slept with his bed jammed up against the silk curtain over the iron door of the safe-room it might have been supposed that he had no cause for nervousness, but he was not satisfied, and as a final precaution he employed four experienced detectives who relieved each other in pairs and who patrolled the corridor outside his private suite day and night.

There was not an expert jewel-thief in Europe who had not heard of the duke's fortress, but few of them abandoned hope of capturing it. The knowledge that a few minutes alone with the safe would enable a man to conceal about his person gems to the value of £700,000 was enough to make them ignore the danger to life and liberty, and one gang in particular, headed by Tom Shaw, of Newcastle, met in Manchester to discuss ways and means. Shaw was a tall, pale-faced, good-looking man of thirty with a quiet demeanour and respectful manner—a typical family servant, in fact—and it was this and his linguistic ability that inspired him to attempt single-handed the attack on the duke's possessions. Capital was required, but his confederates—four in number—subscribed five hundred pounds there and then; and Shaw, provided with forged references bearing the signatures of the Duke of Bedford and Prince Charles of Prussia, left for Paris in the capacity of an out-of-work valet who wished to enter the service of royalty. He had been in Paris eight months when the duke sent to a registry office for a valet and was informed by the proprietor that he had the very man for him on his books. This was Tom Shaw, and his appearance plus his references so impressed the duke that he engaged him on the spot.

The old fox, however, was not running any risks, although he did not take up the references as he was

on bad terms with Prince Charles of Prussia and had an intense dislike of the British aristocracy—the gang had known this when preparing the testimonials—but the day after Shaw had moved in his luggage was ransacked by two of the detectives, who, however, discovered nothing suspicious and reported accordingly. They would have had a shock had they known that Shaw possessed the finest collection of burglar's tools in Europe and that they were capable of opening any safe or strong-room, including the duke's, in less than five minutes. What they could not do was to prevent the bells ringing and the revolvers firing, and it was because of this that Shaw was compelled to act as valet for several months until the duke unconsciously removed the one obstacle to certain success. Besides having his belongings examined, the duke prepared several traps for the Englishman. Once Shaw entered the ducal bedroom with his master's clothes to find it apparently empty, while there were indications that the iron door behind the bed was not locked. The valet coolly proceeded with his duties and then passed out to the landing, smiling grimly to himself because he had guessed that he had never been alone and that he had been covered by a revolver all the time. He had heard that his predecessor had died mysteriously in the bedroom and he believed what rumour said, that he had been shot in the act of approaching the safe. But Shaw was too clever a scoundrel to be tricked in this fashion. It was obvious to him that the duke would not give him free access to the safe-room, and he was aware that when the opportunity he wished for came it would be entirely of his own making.

There were other attempts to trap him, but Shaw behaved as though blissfully ignorant of them all, and as time passed and the duke found that the Englishman was a perfect valet his suspicions disappeared. Shaw seemed to anticipate his every wish and he had the happy knack of always being on hand when wanted

and invisible when his services were not required. He knew exactly what the duke wanted and he made himself indispensable to his employer. But to his secret annoyance months went by and the all-important safe with its vast treasure was never left unguarded, and Shaw was quite helpless, for he had never seen the door of the safe and, therefore, had been unable to ascertain how the electric wires rang the bells and fired the revolvers ; yet he never went on duty without his burglar's outfit concealed on his person, ready for any opportunity that might present itself.

His optimism never deserted him and his mind was ever alert and receptive, and it was entirely due to his cleverness that the chance he was longing for came to him. One night the duke, who was fond of fingering and gloating over his treasures, held up a magnificent diamond necklace for Shaw to see.

"There is not its equal in the world," he cried, triumphantly.

"No, your Highness," answered the valet, with a smile. "I thought at first it was similar to one owned by the Duchess of Bedford, but I see now that it is much superior to her Grace's. What deceived me was the poorness of the setting which fails to bring out the perfect colouring of the stones."

The Duke of Brunswick examined the necklace again and decided that his valet's criticism was justified.

"I'll have it re-set in the morning," he said ; "let the jeweller attend here at ten to do the work."

The next morning at the hour appointed the duke opened the iron door and also the door of the safe—the only man who could do so without ringing the bells and firing the revolvers. Shaw was in the bedroom with every nerve in his body strung and all his thoughts fixed on the treasure. Not a movement of his master's escaped him, and his hopes rose when he noticed that the safe-door was not closed when his Highness re-entered the bedroom to comment angrily on the dilatoriness



of the jeweller. The duke was in a fidgety and irritable mood, and he had passed in and out of the inner room a dozen times when, with a sudden movement, he banged the iron door to and walked on to the landing, where the armed detectives were doing sentry-go.

He was not more than three minutes out of Shaw's sight, but in that time the valet picked the two locks of the iron door and once that was accomplished had only to fill his pockets with the jewels from the safe, the door of which had been left unlocked by the duke, who had imagined that the iron door would be a sufficient protection during his very brief absence. Had the thief had a few more seconds to spare he might have carried off half a million in gems, but even a fraction of a moment was precious, and as soon as he had satisfied himself that he had jewellery worth at least £20,000 on him he rose to his feet, stepped noiselessly into the bedroom, closed the iron door and then coolly walked through the sitting room on to the landing and down the stairs oblivious of the duke and the detectives. In the hall he paused to inform a footman that he was feeling ill and was going to consult a doctor, and then he passed into the street and vanished.

Five minutes after he had gone the most amazing of all jewel robberies was discovered and the frantic duke was screaming for the police. Shaw was naturally suspected and his disappearance coupled with the discovery that he had instructed the jeweller to call at half past ten to re-set the necklace instead of at ten as ordered was sufficient proof of his guilt. The search for the thief was shared by every detective in Paris, and the ports were patrolled by officers on receipt of instructions by telegraph from headquarters. But Shaw, with the aid of his confederates, succeeded in finding refuge in Boulogne, where he was able to pose as a French commercial traveller. His plan was to lie low until the hue and cry had ceased, and he would have avoided arrest if he had kept to that arrangement, but

an examination of his booty led him to believe that amongst the stolen articles was a historic cross formed of diamonds which had once been in the collection of the Queen of England, and he thought he saw in this an opportunity to secure royal protection against the duke. He, therefore, addressed a letter to the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII, offering to restore the jewel for a hundred thousand francs. The letter was sent from Buckingham Palace to Scotland Yard and from there to Paris, where the almost illegible postmark was identified as Boulogne. A thorough search of the seaport town ensued and Shaw was run to earth, and, although the duke declined to prosecute, pretending to be satisfied with the return of the greater part of his property, the accused was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment. He did not survive it, and as in the case of Emily Lawrence it was believed for a long time in Boulogne that shortly before his arrest the Englishman had buried fifty thousand pounds worth of jewels in a field, and even when the fields had been built over innumerable treasure-seekers organised themselves into expeditions to recover the valuables, and failure in no way diminished general belief in the legend.

Adam Worth's theft of uncut diamonds valued at £150,000 from the Cape Town Post Office was notable because he accomplished it single-handed and without doing violence to anyone. He prepared the way by delaying the arrival of the country mail after the boat had left for England, the custom being to arrange for the delivery of the diamonds within a few hours of the sailing of the mail-boat so that they should not be left in the post office overnight. When Worth upset this arrangement he secured the necessary keys which gave him access to the room in which the registered parcels were kept, and after that he had an easy task. The diamonds were never recovered, and they eventually found their way into the hands of American and Continental receivers of stolen goods.

For every jewel theft which has been solved ten have baffled the efforts of the police, and it would be easy to give a list of fifty of these crimes which were never solved. The mother of the present Earl of Dudley lost her jewels, valued at £20,000, at Paddington station, because a clever rogue ascertained that five minutes previous to her ladyship's departure the Prince of Wales was due to leave for Windsor. Knowing that while his Royal Highness was on the platform all the officials would have attention for no one else he walked up to the train where the maid was sitting next to the jewel-case and quietly abstracted it without letting her see him. A few years later another English peeress suffered to the extent of £30,000 by the stratagem of a thief who prepared a case resembling hers and substituted it for that containing her most prized possessions, but the ingenuity of the crooks who steal jewellery is never ending and every year produces some novel device.

## CHAPTER XXI

**THE** story of Eugene Aram has been told so often that to many it must appear to be fiction rather than fact. Novelists and dramatists have found copious material in the career of the schoolmaster with a passion for philology who was arrested in 1758 for a murder committed in 1745, and they have not hesitated to take liberties with history. Lord Lytton's novel, Wills's play and Tom Hood's poem are remembered, and Aram, who thirsted for fame, is more famous than he would ever have become had he not murdered Daniel Clark and had he lived to carry out his great plan of an original dictionary. Yet he ought never to have been convicted, but he had the bad luck to be tried in an age when judge and juries were influenced by inferences rather than evidence, and there is little doubt that had he lived a hundred years later he would never have been pronounced guilty.

There have been, however, many instances where murderers have escaped detection for several years before a guilty conscience, mere chance or the long arm of the law has led to their undoing. Eugene Arams abound in all ages and in all countries, and in almost every case capture has been brought about in the most dramatic because unexpected manner. The arrest and punishment of M'Cann, the murderer, teems with melodrama and human interest, and is not so well known as it ought to be.

In the year 1823 one of the most prosperous butchers in the town of Galway was a ruddy-faced and corpulent man of the name of Bernard Hughes. Genial and hospitable, his character was almost equal to his

reputation, and if he had a failing it was a fondness for bantering sarcasm when under the influence of drink. Those of his acquaintances who did not care to be the subject of his whiskified witticisms had merely to avoid him when he was obviously approaching intoxication to succeed in their object, but strangers to the town could not be expected to know his weakness, and when one summer day a pedlar entered the shop as its proprietor was scattering poisoned personalities he was so impressed by the benevolent countenance of the butcher that he remained to listen, probably hoping that he would not be selected for verbal criticism. Hughes, however, quickly saw in the newcomer a source of fresh inspiration and amusement, and he quickly turned on him.

"You look as if a beefsteak wouldn't do you any harm," he remarked, with a grin, his tone disguised with sympathy.

"Begorra, you may say that," replied the pedlar.

"Still, I shouldn't like to trust you with the price of a beefsteak," continued the butcher, winking on the company to direct their attention to the verbal combat in which he expected an easy victory.

"Ah, then, maybe you'd be right in that same," admitted the other, good-humouredly. "Though, Mr. Hughes, it is not everyone that is to be taken by his looks."

"It is in hemp you ought to be dealing," exclaimed the butcher, while his cronies laughed their applause; "take care you did not mistake your trade."

"Faix, then, if every man got his due," said the pedlar, who had been slyly scrutinising his tormentor's face, "more than me would be dailin' in hemp. But you needn't be so hard on me, Mr. M'Cann."

The sudden mention of the name he had not heard for ten years banished the colour from the butcher's face and gave his eyes an expression of frantic terror. The pedlar realised that his shot had gone home and

deciding to leave whilst the last word was his, he strode out of the shop and turned in the direction of the town, but he had not gone more than a couple of hundred yards when he heard a heavy footfall behind him and simultaneously the burly form of the butcher towered over him.

"I want you to come and breakfast with me to-morrow," Hughes said, in the friendliest manner. "I'll give you the best meal in Galway."

The pedlar immediately accepted, comforting himself with the reminder that it would be impossible for his host to attack him because his premises were situated in the heart of the city.

The breakfast was from the guest's point of view a complete success. Hughes was particularly anxious to please him and he gave him the best his establishment could provide.

"And now I'll take you for a walk and show you some of the sights of Galway," said the butcher, when the pedlar's appetite was satisfied.

During the meal Hughes had not made any reference to the brief scene of the previous day, but as they approached Fort Hill, a lonely spot overlooking the Atlantic, he delicately broached the subject, being evidently anxious to discover how much his guest knew. The latter, however, became alarmed, and when he observed the butcher's agitation, his constant glances backward as if endeavouring to satisfy himself that they were unobserved, and his habit of running in front of him or lingering behind, he guessed the truth, and coming to a stop refused to proceed any further. Hughes calmed down and assented to his wish to go back to the city, but as soon as they were within sight of the busy streets the pedlar fled as if for his life with Hughes at his heels. However, when the pursuer noticed that some strangers were coming in his direction he slowed down and, after watching the pedlar for a few moments, went to his shop.

The alarmed pedlar at once proceeded to the house of the mayor and denounced Bernard Hughes as the murderer of Owen M'Adam, a horse-dealer whose body had been taken out of the canal near the Bridge of Coulavey in the County of Down ten years previously. The chief magistrate was disinclined to believe the statement of the tattered stranger, but the fellow's story was so circumstantial and precise that he gave orders for the arrest of Hughes, who was a few days later transferred to Downpatrick and after a preliminary enquiry placed on trial before Mr. Justice Moore and a jury.

It was proved that Hughes' real name was M'Cann, and a dozen witnesses were produced by the prosecution who established beyond cavil the fact that the prisoner had been the last person seen with M'Adam on the day of the tragedy. The pedlar swore that he had been walking near the canal when he saw M'Cann and M'Adam, the latter intoxicated, arm in arm, and it was his evidence which induced the jury to declare that M'Cann was guilty of having stabbed M'Adam and flung his body into the canal. The testimony for the Crown was so overwhelming that the prisoner's full confession scarcely attracted any attention. While under cross-examination the pedlar stated that he had never intended to visit Galway and that he had arrived there as the result of following a battalion of soldiers without knowing where they were going. Pure chance had likewise led him into the shop of Bernard Hughes, the philanthropic butcher, and it was only the offensive chaff of his former acquaintance that had sent his mind travelling back to the ten-year old encounter on the banks of the canal in County Down. M'Cann was executed, and despite his record as Hughes no petition for a reprieve was presented.

Alcohol also played its part in the unravelling of the mystery of Ann Sheward, who disappeared from Norwich in June, 1851. She was a hard-featured woman with

a mind of her own, and no surprise was expressed when she married William Sheward, an indifferent tailor who was fond of beer and sentiment, and who was just the man to surrender to the influence of a woman years older than himself. When he married her he discovered that he had a task-mistress as well as a wife, and one whose chief object was the attainment of a laborious respectability allied with a reputation for a solvency rare in their particular neighbourhood. Mrs. Sheward dominated her weak-minded husband until the night her gibes at his laziness and drunken habits so exasperated him that he stabbed her with one of the implements of his trade. It was a crime committed semi-consciously, and for hours afterwards Sheward sat in a chair staring helplessly at the corpse. Towards dawn, however, he roused himself, dismembered the body and carried it in instalments to a lane leading from Norwich to Lakenham, and buried it in various places. He could hardly have expected to succeed in escaping punishment for his crime, but it was to his advantage that everybody who had known his wife would be more likely to believe that she was capable of murdering him than he was of taking her life. When, therefore, he explained to a few intimates that Mrs. Sheward had left him no surprise was expressed. She had been heard to repent her marriage and to wish that she could get rid of her husband, and accordingly when Norwich saw her no more it did seem plausible that she should have gone to London to start a fresh career for herself there.

But within a few months of the murder Sheward was horrified to be told that human remains had been found in the Lakenham road. A dog had dragged a human hand from out of a ditch ; then it had unearthed a foot, and many other pieces of a female corpse were discovered and handed to a local surgeon for a special report. He was able to " build " up enough of a corpse to justify him in forming a very definite opinion of the



ease, and those neighbours of Sheward's who believed that he had slain his wife and had cut up her body made no secret of their hostility towards the man they expected would be arrested soon.

The medical opinion, however, saved him, for the doctor pronounced the remains to be those of a female of not more than twenty-six, explaining that "the well-filled understructures of the skin, its delicacy, the neatness of the foot, that of a person not accustomed to toil or to wear coarse, heavy shoes, the clean, well-trimmed nails of both hands and feet" convinced him that she had been quite young at the time of her death. Mrs. Sheward had been fifty-six at the time of her disappearance.

The report caused a reaction in Sheward's favour and those who had done him an injustice hastened to make friendly advances. But the murderer was never happy or at peace with himself. Knowing that if he became intoxicated he would confess he avoided the public-houses, and the enforced sobriety was torture to a weak mind prone to sentiment and addicted to self-reviling. He worked hard in his anxiety to banish memories of the past, and to his surprise he became prosperous. Cured of his fondness for alcohol he had little use for money and as a result his account at the savings bank increased rapidly. Mrs. Sheward ceased to be a topic of conversation and her elopement was very stale news. Sheward, however, could not forget. At any moment he expected to see an officer of the law enter his house with a warrant for his arrest, and when a policeman did accost him in his own doorway he had not the strength to answer him.

"I want Mrs. Sheward's address," said the constable, brusquely. "She ran away to London, didn't she, about four years ago?"

The murderer gained time for recovery by beckoning him into a room at the back.

"What's the matter?" asked Sheward, nervously,

trying not to see the official-looking document which the man held in his hand.

"Good news," replied the constable, smiling. "An aunt of hers has died and left her three hundred pounds. If Mrs. Sheward wants the cash she must appear in person before the magistrate and be identified."

"I don't know her address," said Sheward, as soon as relief had restored his courage. "But I'll try and find her."

Three times did the constable call in the ensuing twelve months, but on each occasion Sheward had to confess that he was unable to produce his wife. The murderer wished that he could have obtained what would have been a small fortune to him, but he dare not attempt to claim it, and when the court no longer troubled him he was grateful.

Ten years after the murder of his wife he married again, for his position was now apparently impregnable, and he was regarded as well-to-do and a model of sobriety. The second Mrs. Sheward, however, did not care for his fondness for dwelling on the rare qualities of her predecessor and his lachrymose lamentations irritated her. There were constant quarrels on account of this weakness of his, but for nearly eight years they kept their differences a secret from their neighbours. However, in the last week of December, 1868, Mrs. Sheward suggested that he should pay a visit to London, in the hope that the change would do him good, and he accepted her advice, Norwich having lately become unbearable and its Christmas gaiety a mockery.

On January 1st, 1869, William Sheward, his brain fuddled by the beer he had drunk that day after a long abstinence, came to a standstill in a Walworth street and gazed about him. He had been walking for hours with no settled plan, and until he glanced up at the name of the street he was ignorant of his whereabouts. Then to his amazement he realised that he was actually on the very spot where thirty years earlier he had

made the acquaintance of the wife he had murdered. The coincidence was too much for him, and seeing a policeman at the corner he ran to him and blurted out a confession of his crime.

Twenty-four hours later he wished to retract it, but already the authorities had been at work and had obtained sufficient confirmation of his statement to decide them to prosecute him for the murder of Ann Sheward. Sheward was transferred to Norwich; the remains which had been pronounced to be those of a girl were exhumed and submitted to eminent London doctors, who declared them to belong to a woman in the fifties, and at his trial witnesses corroborated his confession. He was convicted, and on April 20th, 1869, he was executed for the murder of his wife in June, 1851.

An even longer interval elapsed between the crime and the punishment of Jonathan Gaydon, who murdered Miss Mary White at Chingford on June 21st, 1857, and who was convicted and sentenced to death on October 24th, 1879. Gaydon's motive was robbery, and he was hiding in the house of his father's friend, Mr. Small, when the latter's sister, an elderly woman, discovered him, and was murdered because dead women tell no tales. It does not say much for the detective skill of the Essex police sixty-three years ago that they should have allowed the young ruffian to escape, for the instant Mary White's body was found Gaydon was named as her slayer. A reward was offered for his arrest, but it was never claimed, and the criminal tramped up and down England until hunger induced him to enlist in the army, and for six years he was known as Private Charles Wilson. Then he deserted and went on the tramp again, and it was a miserable caricature of humanity who in the autumn of 1879 startled a Horsham policeman by surrendering to him as the murderer of Mary White twenty-two years earlier. Gaydon was prosecuted by Sir Harry Poland, K.C., then, of course, minus his knighthood and a silk gown,

and defended by the present Mr. Justice Avory, and more fortunate than Sheward and M'Cann, he was reprieved after being sentenced to death.

There is a wealth of dramatic and sensational material in the tragedy of Netherwood Farm, almost the strangest story in the annals of crime. It was at a time when the first Napoleon was conquering Europe that the Rev. Mr. Parker was rector of Oddingley in Worcestershire, an agricultural parish which felt acutely the successes of the great Frenchman on the Continent. Mr. Parker was the principal landowner in the neighbourhood, and despite his sacred calling he was fond of laying up treasure for himself on earth. He was a pitiless creditor and a merciless enemy, and his parishioners hated him, nicknaming him "Bonaparte" Parker, because to them he was the embodiment of tyranny and oppression. It is not surprising, therefore, that a feud existed between parson and people or that there should have been wild mutterings on one side and contemptuous retorts on the other. The situation became so critical that in the year 1806 half a dozen of the most prominent inhabitants met one night to discuss the advisability of assassinating the clergyman. There was talk of choosing the murderer by lot, but none of the conspirators would promise to abide by it, and a way out of the *impasse* was propounded by the leader, a well-to-do miller, who suggested that they should subscribe sufficient money between them to hire an assassin. The plan was adopted, and that night Hemmings, an avowed enemy of "Bonaparte" Parker, was offered fifty pounds to murder the rector. Forty-eight hours later the village tyrant was dead and the police were looking for Hemmings, who had vanished. The parish was rid of its tyrant, and the six conspirators went to their daily tasks contented if not happy.

That was in 1806, and the succeeding years made history and the fortunes of five of the six plotters. Incidentally the real Bonaparte met his Waterloo and

sojourned in St. Helena ; three kings of England died ; and kingdoms rose and fell. The police believed that Hemmings, the murderer of Mr. Parker, had escaped to America, and they took no further interest in him, and the men who had bribed him to slay the parson had the best of reasons for not reviving the subject. By the time that 1880 came two of them were wealthy men who had raised themselves to positions in the county, while three others were passing rich, and only one had failed to prosper.

Twenty-four years after the shooting of " Bonaparte " Parker Netherwood Farm was bought by a gentleman who ordered his agent to have it thoroughly done up. Amongst other improvements decreed was the removal of an ancient and unsightly barn, and the workmen were demolishing it when they came upon the complete skeleton of a man whose skull had been battered in. At its feet were a pair of shoes of a peculiar shape and a carpenter's measure with a certain mark on it. The news of the discovery spread far and wide, and when the police were most bewildered a mellowed specimen of the " oldest inhabitant " class suddenly recalled the disappearance of Hemmings and suggested that Mrs. Hemmings should be shown the skeleton. This was done promptly, and the widow identified it at once by the peculiar formation of the mark on the measure. " That is my husband's skeleton," she said, confidently. " He must have been murdered the same day as Parson Parker."

The crime was nearly a quarter of a century old, but when the police went in search of the culprits they found three of them residing within a few miles of Netherwood Farm. Two were rich ; the third was a pauper ; and it was the wastrel who, in the panic caused by the arrests, confessed. He related how the six would-be murderers had at a conference summoned hurriedly when the clergyman's death was reported, decided that it would be sheer folly to permit Hemmings

to live. It was obvious that he would blackmail them and that at any moment he might betray them in his cups. Self-preservation dictated his destruction. They had already arranged with Hemmings to meet them all in the barn at Netherwood Farm that night to receive payment, but when the sextette of sinners assembled it was not to pay their agent his wages but to murder the murderer. Half a dozen determined men can achieve anything, and when Hemmings was dead they brought in sufficient earth to raise the floor of the barn to the level of his grave. They did their work well, and but for the whim of the new owner of Netherwood to banish the unlovely building their crime would never have come to light.

The three men were tried at the assizes and acquitted, for neither judge nor jury wished to see two men of position in the county sent to a shameful death because of the uncorroborated confession of the third prisoner. His lordship summed up strongly in their favour, and the jury, human enough to decline to hang men for a crime committed in a previous generation, gladly took the hint to bring in a verdict of not guilty. There was, however, no doubt that they had executed Hemmings the night of the day on which he had shot "Bonaparte" Parker, the militant parson of Oddingley. It will be of interest to the superstitious to hear that none of the prisoners had any luck after the trial and that they all died in misery.

The acquittal of Richard Goldsborough in 1842, who was charged with the murder of William Huntley in 1830, was a miscarriage of justice, for there was complete proof that the skeleton discovered near Yarm, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, was Huntley's, and the prosecution also proved that Goldsborough was the last person to be with the murdered man and that he had become possessed of a large sum of money on the day of Huntley's disappearance. The case attracted an enormous amount of attention at the time and

although not nearly as interesting as the Oddingley murders, has been more often the subject of pamphlets and newspaper articles. In 1880 Huntley, a morose person with an inexhaustible stock of grievances, was paid eighty-five pounds odd and almost immediately he vanished, and Goldsborough, who had been with Huntley up to within an hour of his disappearance, displayed an unusual prosperity, but he was not molested, and when he left the Yarm and went to live in Barnsley he was undisturbed for twelve years. Then the remains of the missing man were found and identified, and Goldsborough was arrested. Acquittal did not save him from the judgment of public opinion, and he was never the same man again, for everybody regarded him as a murderer, and he was shunned for the rest of his life.

## CHAPTER XXII

**THERE** is something supremely exciting in the spectacle of a fight against odds, especially if the minority has a chance of winning, but when a man opposes society and all its resources, the penalty of failure being death, it is only natural that the contest should in certain cases engender an excitement hardly distinguishable from hysteria. That is the reason why many notorious criminals have become historical characters and have been the objects of a sympathy which is entirely out of place if their sins are considered. Turpin, Wild, Sheppard, Eugene Aram, Corder and Co., are thieves and murderers who ought to be branded as infamous for all time, but legend had busied itself with their names, and, if not exactly heroes, they are at any rate personages.

A cynic has remarked that society despises two classes—those who attack it and those who defend it—but that is not quite true, and it has been falsified often enough when the world has been startled by the commission of a brutal murder followed by the disappearance of the murderer. The fugitive from justice is the object of no inconsiderable amount of sympathy because the odds are so heavy against him, and the knowledge that in these days of universal intercommunication the miscreant has only an infinitesimal chance of escaping arouses what is queerly termed “the sporting spirit,” and even obese taxpayers bristling with respectability can deal tenderly with the murderer’s name. Take the case of the pseudo-doctor Crippen. It requires no effort of memory to recall the universal execration the news of his crime



created and how anxious everybody was for his capture. His was, perhaps, the most famous of all flights from justice, and the late Sir Melville MacNaughton assured me that he never had known Scotland Yard so anxious and excited about a fugitive as it was on Crippen's account. Yet to-day it is his flight and capture which are chiefly remembered, and already the historians of his trial are slowly but surely whitewashing him. In one report the mutilator is gravely discussed from the "psychological"—blessed word!—point of view, and he is pictured as quiet, retiring, shy and amiable, and, therefore, more to be pitied than blamed because being fond of a quiet life circumstances compelled him to poison his noisy, self-assertive and stagey wife, and cut her body in pieces! But Crippen was just a commonplace, cowardly criminal who treacherously murdered an unsuspecting woman in order that he might enjoy the society of a younger. His onerous Odyssey redeemed his personality from obscurity, for there is nothing quite so dramatic—melodramatic, I might say—in the annals of crime, and, like all true melodrama, there is considerable comic relief in it.

With his companion wearing male attire so that she might pass for his son, Crippen decamped to the Continent and after a brief sojourn in Antwerp embarked on the *Montrose* for America. He was now "Mr. Robinson," and in that rôle he proved himself an excellent actor, but the girl was a poor actress and her fondness for squeezing the hand of her "father" aroused the captain's suspicions. When the latter wished to ascertain if "Mr. Robinson's" teeth were false—the official description of Crippen said the fugitive's were artificial—he told him a funny story, and the obliging passenger laughed. But Crippen often laughed during the voyage, one music-hall song in particular tickling his fancy. "What a wonderful invention wireless telegraphy is!" he remarked to the captain, unaware that he was going to give it a splendid

advertisement, for a "wireless" message to England enabled Scotland Yard to dispatch Chief Inspector Dew to Quebec by a faster vessel and arrest the doctor and his friend before they could land. Crippen was quite cool when confronted by the detective, but he broke down when he realised that arrest meant complete and final separation from the woman he had insisted on taking with him when he must have known that her presence would reduce his chance of escape to zero.

Both Franz Muller and Oscar Slater strenuously denied that their journeys to America were in the nature of flights from justice, and in the case of the latter—who is now serving the fourteenth year of a life sentence—there are many, including the writer of this article, who believe that he did not murder Miss Gilchrist. Although forty-four years separated the two crimes they contain several points of resemblance. The victims were elderly—a lady of eighty-two and a man of sixty-nine—and their convicted murderers were young Germans. Each crime was followed by a voyage across the Atlantic and the trials in Great Britain were preceded by legal contests in New York, and, finally, the condemned men were loudly championed by advocates of mercy. Unfortunately for Muller, the coincidences end here, for only Slater was saved from the hangman.

Muller, however, could have escaped if he had displayed more acumen and had laid his plans with intelligence. It can hardly be doubted nowadays that his was the hand that struck down Mr. Briggs, the bank clerk, on the North London Railway in July, 1864, and the fact that he had several days previously announced his intention of going to America does not affect the issue. The property of the murdered man was clearly traced to him and he had no satisfactory explanation to offer of any one of the many damaging statements proved by the Crown. His blunder in planning his flight was in selecting a sailing vessel instead of a steamship, but Muller undoubtedly believed

that he would never be thought of in connection with the Briggs' mystery, and that in the circumstances he could travel safely by the cheapest route. However, with a little luck the police got on his trail, and the officers who went to New York with the necessary legal documents actually arrived three weeks before the suspect. Now, if Muller had availed himself of the swiftest transit he could have escaped retribution by enlisting in the Northern Army the moment he reached America. He was arrested immediately and after a determined fight in the extradition court handed over to the English officers for transference to London. The speech of counsel on Muller's behalf must have brought joy to Charles Dickens. The late H. B. Irving described it as of the true "Jefferson Brick" brand, and he did not exaggerate. Mr. Schaffer was defending a cowardly young murderer and he wisely said as little as possible about his client, but he utilised the occasion to deliver a harangue on the sins of Great Britain, and a crowded court heard all about the *Alabama*, and other political subjects. He extolled the "free United States" and declared its motto was "Excelsior," and occasionally he criticised numerous important Britons, dead and living, and at one time waxed so eloquent that the more ignorant portion of his audience must have thought that the reputation of George III was at stake and not the life of a German tailor. Muller may be said to have been the first murderer to excite universal interest. Thousands assembled to watch his ship enter New York harbour, thousands saw him start for England, and in England he was as exclusive a topic of conversation as Crippen was to be many years later. A fellow-voyager on the sailing ship which took the fleeing murderer to America when asked for his recollections of a famous voyage could only recall Muller as the young man who had wagered that he would eat five pounds of German sausages at one meal and had failed.

For sheer horror and mystery the murder of Miss Gilchrist in Glasgow on December 21st, 1908, is unequalled. Here was a lady of eighty-two with a passion for collecting jewellery, who realised that her life was in danger and took precautions accordingly, and yet she was brutally murdered and mystery broods over the case to this day. Miss Gilchrist lived in a flat—in Scotland termed a house—at 15, Queen's Terrace. The flat above was unoccupied and that beneath was tenanted by Mr. Adams and his sister, and Miss Gilchrist had an arrangement with them that if ever she required their assistance she would knock on the floor of her room. In addition to this the front door of her flat was protected by two patent locks in addition to the ordinary lock and chain as well as a heavy bolt. She also had special fastenings for her windows.

On the night of December 21st Miss Gilchrist's servant went out at seven to purchase an evening paper for her, and at ten minutes past the hour she returned, and in the interval her mistress was murdered. Those ten minutes had been pregnant with dramatic incident, for within a few seconds of the maid's departure Mr. Adams had heard a heavy fall and three sharp knocks. Instantly he made his way to the door of Miss Gilchrist's flat and rang the bell three times, and as it sounded it must have seemed like a death-knell to the murderer who was standing over his prostrate victim in the dining room. Mr. Adams, receiving no response, returned to his flat, for he knew the old lady was reticent and intolerant of interference, and it was only when his sister persuaded him to go back that he did. He had just rung the bell again when the servant reappeared with the two keys of the patent locks which she had taken with her. She promptly opened the door and entered, leaving Mr. Adams in the hall, and now occurred the most dramatic incident of the tragic mystery. The murderer had been trapped in the flat, the ringing of the bell warning him that someone was

on guard outside the only exit, and for a few agonising minutes he was a prisoner, listening intently to every sound. He heard the door open and the voices of the girl and the man, and realising it was neck or nothing this time he determined to make a desperate dash for his life. When, therefore, the maid came towards the kitchen the murderer emerged from his hiding place and keeping his face in the shadow as much as possible he walked towards Mr. Adams, who did not attempt to detain him, being under the impression that the stranger was a friend of Miss Gilchrist. The moment, however, the murderer got level with Mr. Adams he dropped all pretence of composure and dashed past him down the stairs, slamming the door of the building before disappearing into the crowded street. For four days the Glasgow police were clueless and hopeless, and if it had not been for an astonishing coincidence—subsequently proved to be due to an official blunder—it is probable that Slater might never have been suspected. Amongst the articles of jewellery missing from Miss Gilchrist's collection was a diamond brooch of a not very common design and when information reached the detective department that a German of bad character had been trying to sell the pawnticket of a similar brooch the authorities decided that it was a very valuable clue. Accordingly, steps were taken to trace Slater, who had left Glasgow a few hours after his name was first mentioned in connection with the mystery and who was on board the ill-fated *Lusitania* and passing as "Otto Sando" by the time his antecedents had been established definitely by the Glasgow police. There seemed nothing unreasonable in their assumption that the pawned brooch had been Miss Gilchrist's and that Slater's voyage to America was a flight from justice. A cable to New York secured his arrest simultaneously with the berthing of the huge liner, and when the witnesses, Mr. Adams, Helen Lambie, the murdered woman's maid, and others arrived the

extradition proceedings began. The identification of Slater was confused and contradictory, but the prisoner, evidently anxious to stand his trial in Scotland, suddenly announced that he would return of his own accord and face his accusers. He was, therefore, brought back to Scotland, and an enormous crowd which awaited his boat at Stobcross Quay were disappointed because near Renfrew the prisoner and his escort were landed and completed the journey to Glasgow in two motor cars. The fugitive had been to America and back in a couple of months, most of which had been spent in gaol in New York, and he had, all told, travelled about eight thousand miles.

Those who were present during the four days' trial before the late Lord Guthrie at Glasgow must admit that Slater bore himself like an innocent man, but his character was the heaviest weight the defence had to carry, and the Crown, magnificently represented by Mr. Alexander Ure, now Lord Strathclyde and ex-Lord President, insisted that the prisoner had had one motive only in going to America under a false name and that was to evade punishment for his crime. On behalf of the accused it was shown that the diamond brooch which had first brought him into undesired prominence had been in his possession long before Miss Gilchrist had been murdered and could not, therefore, have ever belonged to her. The Lord Advocate did not trouble to deal with this, but his eloquence was so convincing that, in spite of the unsatisfactory identification of Slater with the man who had dashed past Mr. Adams on the night of the murder, they brought in a verdict of guilty. The prisoner protested, but the sentence of the law was death, and an overwrought audience trooped out wondering if they had seen justice done. It was Mr. Ure's clever interpretation of Slater's movements, particularly his flight disguised as "Otto Sando," that won the contest for the prosecution. A weaker counsel would have failed, for on the third day of the trial

it is no exaggeration to say that nearly everybody in court expected a verdict of guilty. That the authorities were not satisfied was evident when Slater was reprieved, and three years later the Secretary for Scotland ordered a special enquiry into the case. It did not, however, secure the prisoner's release.

That most resolute of female murderers, Maria Manning, was a Swiss who married an Englishman because he was a weak rogue and she wanted someone to dominate. Frederick George Manning was a sort of hanger-on to some of the most daring criminals in London. Besides being a sinner Manning had at one time been literally a publican, and he married Maria le Roux because he had grown tired of the struggle to obtain money without working for it, and he was certain such an ingenious and original creature would produce funds from somewhere.

The "somewhere" eventually proved to be an Irishman, Patrick O'Connor, who had saved a considerable sum and who, meeting Maria after years of separation, was beguiled into parting with various sums by the urgent and tearful entreaties of the woman he had once loved. But O'Connor could not be induced to part with his savings quickly enough, and Mrs. Manning planned his death in her house in Miniver Place, Bermondsey. She and her husband purchased a spade and some lime, and one night O'Connor came to supper and was shot through the head by Maria, Manning, as usual, keeping in the background, "willing to wound yet afraid to strike." The Irishman was buried in the kitchen, and the next morning the murderess coolly went to his lodgings and ransacked his bedroom, coming away with a large number of securities and some ready money. Mrs. Manning took a big risk when she decided to remain at Miniver Place as though nothing had happened, but when she learnt that shortly before calling O'Connor had met a friend in the street and had casually referred to his appointment with her she

resolved on flight. All the time Manning had been apprehensive and wishful of leaving, but the woman was so little affected by her crime that one of the four days she passed in the house subsequent to the murder was spent by her in the kitchen where, sitting on a chair directly on her victim's grave, she mended certain articles belonging to her wardrobe. Her husband, a prey to terror, sought relief from his thoughts in a neighbouring public-house !

The remarkable woman was not even alarmed when two detectives called to enquire concerning Patrick O'Connor, and she was the personification of serenity as she answered their questions and offered to conduct them through the various rooms. Her manner so impressed them that they departed feeling relieved that they had not accepted the advice of a neighbour and arrested her, but their visit had altered the situation, and Maria instantly began her famous flight from justice.

O'Connor was murdered on August 9th, 1849, and on the 13th Maria engaged a cabman to drive her and her luggage to London Bridge Station, where she deposited three trunks all labelled "Mrs. Smith," one having the words "Passenger to Paris" added. Then she went on to Euston Station, where she purchased a ticket for Edinburgh, arriving there on the 14th after spending a night at Newcastle. By now the body had been exhumed at the house in Miniver Place and the police were looking for Maria and her husband. The latter had fled on the 14th and was on his way to Jersey, but as the efforts of the detectives produced clues which led them towards the woman they concentrated on her, well aware that she had been the Delilah who had lured the Irishman to his doom.

Meanwhile, there was an exciting chase at sea. London had become frenzied over the Mannings and the fugitives were "recognised" in a score of places and anyone remotely resembling either of them was mobbed. Rumour also was busy, and in one instance it was so



insistent and circumstantial that the police decided that the Mannings had got on board the *Victoria*, bound for New York. Orders were sent to Portsmouth for a Government steamer, *Fire-teen*, to set out in pursuit, and after chasing a large ship for five miles discovered it was a Prussian man-of-war. The next day the *Victoria* was overhauled and the origin of the rumour ascertained, for amongst the emigrants were two girls named Manning, the officers having merely to glance at them to understand they had been misinformed.

The discovery of the cabman who had conveyed Mrs. Manning and her luggage from Miniver Place led to the solving of the mystery. With his help it was easy to trace her luggage to London Bridge Station, and once it had been opened and property belonging to the murderess and her victim identified no great detective ability was required to ascertain that the woman had gone to Edinburgh via Euston. In the Scottish capital she proceeded to betray herself by attempting to dispose of railway scrip belonging to O'Connor, and when the stockbroker reported the interview with "Mrs. Smith" the Edinburgh police called at her lodgings and took her into custody. Her flight began on the 13th and ended on the 21st of August, 1849, but during the period represented Maria Manning had been the most discussed person in England, and at the dinner-tables of the great she had been the principal topic. Dickens was greatly excited by the tragedy and the attempt to escape, and right up to the end he took a deep interest in the Mannings. He witnessed their execution, and his letter on the subject to the *Times* led to a revival of the agitation against public hangings which carried that much-neded reform in 1868. Manning was taken at St. Heliers, Jersey, on August 27th, and his flight was as commonplace as himself, being only remarkable for his prodigious appetite and drinking-powers. He was suspected as soon as news of the Bermondsey crime

reached the island, and it was only a question of time for his arrest to be effected.

When Jabez Balfour received a telegram from a friend informing him that two of his colleagues had been arrested he unostentatiously left his country house for London, collected fifteen hundred pounds in notes and gold, and departed for South America via Spain and Portugal. That was in 1892 and England did not see him again until 1895. The interval was spent in a continuous fight against the agents of Scotland Yard, one of whom was the famous Frank Froest, and the Argentine Government not being on the best of terms with Great Britain the fugitive's extradition was refused after Balfour had been arrested. Encouraged by his triumph the author of the *Liberator* frauds purchased a brewery and prepared to become a citizen of the republic, but at a cost of many thousands of pounds the British representatives persevered until they secured a favourable verdict from the Supreme Court of Argentine. Even then there was an attempt to rescue the popular embezzler and the detectives had to adopt numerous ruses. However, they got him back to London safely, and he was eventually sentenced to fourteen years' penal servitude. Probably there has never been a flight from justice in modern times which has been so near success as Balfour's, for when Rowland Stephenson, M.P., carried off £70,000 in 1828 and was never captured he was exceptionally favoured because he lived in an age which knew not the Atlantic cable nor an efficient detective system. Stephenson was a criminal in the grand manner. He had a lordly country house in Essex and a mansion in London, and he represented Leominster in the House of Commons. Reputed to be a millionaire, he was courted by the leading statesmen of the day, and he was greatly in request as treasurer of hospitals and other charitable institutions. The governors of St. Bartholomew's considered themselves fortunate when Stephenson accepted the position of

honorary treasurer, but they were of a different opinion when rumours reached them that the bank owned by the M.P. was in financial difficulties. To test the rumours a cheque for five thousand pounds was drawn on behalf of the hospital and presented for payment, but, although it was duly met, three hours later the bank closed its doors, and Rowland Stephenson's lifelong game of bluff terminated dramatically. With a fortune in his possession the rogue, accompanied by a confidential clerk, set out for Clovelly in Devonshire, from there reached Milford Haven in an open boat and caught a brig bound for Savannah. And that was the last heard of him by the London detectives who were entrusted with the task of pursuing him !

Somewhat reminiscent of Balfour's adventures is the story of James Young, the Harvard University graduate who was private secretary to old Jacob Astor, and stole thirty thousand pounds belonging to his employer. Young fled to England and for two years concealed his identity, but a clever Scotland Yard detective ran him to earth at Folkestone and carried him off to London. Within a few days, however, Young was free because a diplomatic disagreement between Great Britain and the United States had rendered null and void all extradition treaties, and four more years passed before the differences were adjusted. Jacob Astor, bereaved of his money, had refused to be comforted, and never once had he relaxed in his determination to have the thief punished, and that was why James Young, residing in a Birmingham suburb and married to a charming English girl who knew nothing of his crime, was again traced and arrested. A few months afterwards he was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment in New York.

It is impossible, of course, to give details of all the most famous attempts by wrongdoers to escape punishment. Robson and Redpath, two famous embezzlers, fled to the Continent ; Cole, a city merchant who

obtained £250,000 by false pretences, led a couple of Scotland Yard men a merry dance over Europe before being arrested at Southampton.

There was one American criminal who, when the hue and cry was at its fiercest, took lodgings opposite the headquarters of the detective force engaged in hunting him down. None of the sleuths thought of searching the lodging-house within a few feet of the station, especially as one of their number also lived there, and the crook, patiently waiting until the police had to admit defeat, leisurely departed and was not recognised until ten years afterwards, when he was convicted of burglary in Chicago.

## CHAPTER XXIII

SCOTLAND Yard is probably the best known and most renowned of British institutions, for it has earned the reputation of being the most perfect organisation of its kind in the world. It has made some mistakes and there have been several internal convulsions, principally due to dissensions amongst its chiefs, and there has been at least one tragedy—the fall from grace of the three inspectors whose trial in 1877 was thought by many to mark its collapse— but out of the ruins of that catastrophe a newer and a better Scotland Yard arose, and the man chiefly responsible for its redemption was a son of Perthshire, by name, Adolphus F. Williamson, a clerk in the War Office until he resigned to become a uniformed constable.

When Williamson was drafted to Scotland Yard in the fifties the detective branch consisted of a small number of men of bull-dog courage and indifferent education. They tackled ferocious criminals without flinching, but suffered agonies when drawing up their reports. There was an early colleague of Williamson's whose special task was to patrol the vicinity of Buckingham Palace and report daily thereon, and one evening he informed the commissioner in writing that "Her Majesty the Queen left Buckingham Palace at 10.30 a.m. escorted by a troop of dragons." On another occasion he wrote that he could not get an interview with a certain famous barrister because that gentleman had gone "the Oxford Circus." The arrival of the Scotsman, who had received a good education and who was still pursuing his studies, created a mild sensation and some resentment, but Williamson, by the

charm of his personality, soon earned their respect and goodwill, and when his superior talents and accomplishments gained for him rapid promotion there was little jealousy. Williamson was a detective-sergeant when Muller murdered Mr. Briggs on the North London Railway and the Scotsman took part in the subsequent man-hunt. From that period until 1889 his name was associated with almost every problem Scotland Yard was called on to solve, and he was personally responsible for several of the solutions. He had Orsini arrested at the instance of the French Government, who charged the Italian with the crime of attempting to murder Napoleon III. A sensational trial at the Old Bailey ensued and Orsini was acquitted, and it required all the diplomacy of the Government to soothe the ruffled feelings of the Buonapartists.

But political crimes are seldom interesting, and we can pass over Williamson's battles with the Fenians and his contests with the Anarchist colony which established itself in London in the sixties, seventies and eighties. The Scotsman won his laurels by the manner in which he brought to justice several murderers, notably Margaret Dixblanes, the Belgian, who killed her mistress, Madame Riel, in a little house in Park Lane and escaped to Paris. Williamson personally investigated the case, and when he obtained three descriptions of the suspect's appearance and an account of her mannerisms he decided that she would make herself conspicuous by spending some of the stolen money on finery. A detective was sent to Paris with instructions to search for a woman with a passion for cheap finery and an accommodating disposition so far as the male sex was concerned, and in a few days the murderess was in custody. She was sentenced to death, but was fortunate in being reprieved.

The Russian roubles case was another of Williamson's triumphs, for this was a perfectly planned and organised swindle, and when it was in full swing it threatened to

wreck the finances of the Russian Empire. In the middle seventies some scores of towns in the Czar's dominions were flooded with three-rouble notes so perfectly made as to defy the scrutiny of all but the most eminent experts. The Russian police were panic-stricken when they failed to trace the conspirators and three of their chiefs had been removed by the exasperated emperor before an intelligent underling discovered a clue which indicated that the forgeries were done in London. Immediately Williamson was appealed to, and with a couple of officers to assist him he set to work. All the forgers known to Scotland Yard were shadowed, but it was a casual remark in a Soho public-house which gave the detective his first genuine clue. He overheard a French Anarchist say that Russia was the place where money was to be made if only one had enough paper. Williamson shadowed the fellow to his lodgings, saw a couple of Russian exiles creep in after him, tracked them to their lair and by haunting them for a week discovered that they spent their nights in a cellar under a shop in the East End. At the right moment Williamson and a squad of Scotland Yard detectives rushed the cellar and captured the forgers, their plant and millions of "roubles" intended for exportation to Russia.

Charles Peace and Dr. Lamson were two of the murderers around whom the Scotsman constructed a living wall which resulted in the first-named being taken in the act of burglary and the latter forced to surrender. It was the same with many other wrongdoers, because for more than twenty years Adolphus Williamson was the official chiefly responsible for the special forces which Society has organised against its enemies. In all cases he displayed consummate judgment, and to the men who worked under him he was guide, philosopher and friend. It was a bitter blow to him when three of his chief-inspectors succumbed to the wiles of the Benson gang, and to the day of his

death Williamson never forgot it, but right to the end he was the spirit which animated the Yard, for, as Sir William Harcourt said, "His temper, his judgment and his intelligence were very remarkable and singularly fitted him for one of the most difficult posts a man can be called on to fill."

When the exposure of the three detectives in 1877 led to the re-organisation of the detective force Williamson decided to strengthen the department by bringing to headquarters half a dozen of the picked men from the Metropolitan Divisions. One of the chosen was Walter Melville—so long known in Anarchist circles as "*le vile Melville*"—who justified his chief's selection by achieving the position of Superintendent of the C.I.D. in record time. Melville was a man of singular charm and exceptional courage. Ambitious men do not as a rule make many friends, but Melville's popularity was second only to Williamson's. When he was a junior in rank he was often chosen to arrest desperate criminals who were known to believe in the efficacy of the revolver and the dagger as arrest-preventives, and those officers who accompanied him noticed that Melville took most of the risks himself. When the time came that it was in his power to allot the daily tasks it was observed that he reserved the most dangerous for himself. No wonder his colleagues admired him and that they worked with rare energy and loyalty when under his command. Melville inspired confidence in others simply because he was confidence itself.

A typical Melville triumph was his capture of the two Anarchists, Francois and Meunier, accused of complicity in the dynamite outrage at the Café Very in Paris in 1892. The criminal desperadoes fled to London, where they vanished into an obscurity which was as astonishing as it was perplexing. Their comrade, Ravachol, had been captured and was on his way to the guillotine, and Scotland Yard knew very well that the fugitives



would not hesitate to murder anyone who tried to arrest them. To Melville was assigned the duty of complying with the request of the French Government for their extradition, and by a careful and thorough canvass of Soho and its grimy and picturesque foreign colony he traced Francois to a lodging-house of unsavoury reputation. But the Frenchman was on the alert, and when the detective called in the guise of a sanitary inspector he realised that he had been outwitted, for the landlady promptly informed him that "the gentleman on the first floor" had hurriedly departed. Melville at once examined the room and in the fireplace he found half a paper bag which had once contained edibles. It bore the address of a Poplar tradesman, and that was a good enough clue to send him to that populous if not popular suburb. Here he had not much difficulty in ascertaining the new address of the French refugee, but he paused when he heard that Francois had prepared a sort of fortress to repel the attentions of his foes. The criminal had taken a room at the top of an ancient building and he had strengthened the door with extra locks and, in order that the enemy might not take him unawares, he had tampered with the stairs so that now they resounded most audibly to contact with human feet. A breathlessly excited woman recounted how she had seen a table in front of the door with two revolvers on it—"One for madame, and one for monsieur!" she cried—and there were hints that the Francois fort included vitriol for the eyes of the detectives.

But all these preparations struck Melville as being merely melodramatic and he set to work to capture the ruffian with his usual coolness and thoroughness. At the proper time a cordon of plain clothes policemen was drawn around the building, and Melville, with half a dozen trusty officers, entered and paused in the hall. The plan was to rush the "fortress" and trust to luck to avoid any casualties. Fortune, however, favoured

the brave that night, for Francois, who had never left his room after dark, was reading a French paper when the lamplight began to fail. He was impatient to continue and he resolved to go out and buy some oil, and, having carefully reconnoitred the stairs, landings and hall without catching a glimpse of the hidden shadows, he crept down and into the arms of Walter Melville. Although taken by surprise he made a fierce and almost successful resistance, and, wrenching himself free, he fired three times at the detective without hitting him. When the tiger was rendered helpless the tigress was approached, and she proved even fiercer than her mate, but her shots also went wide, and Francois returned to Paris a prisoner and was sentenced to penal servitude for life. Two years later Melville was waiting for a train at Victoria Station when he saw Meunier on the platform. Recognition was mutual and the detective, knowing his enemy was armed and had sworn to kill him at sight, impetuously flung himself on him and bore him to the ground. Over and over the two men rolled in deadly combat, to the amazement of the bystanders. Melville was physically extremely powerful, and Meunier, although his strength was reinforced by desperation, was overpowered, and after a theatrical display at Bow Street extradited to his native country to join his friend, Francois, in penal servitude.

Associated with Melville in many of his exploits was Patrick Quinn, who succeeded him as superintendent of the special branch of the C.I.D. The two men formed a remarkably successful partnership and they had very few failures. They were never spectacular, for Scotland Yard does not encourage the detective with a leaning towards theatricalism, and average results are preferred to a few brilliant successes and many failures. They had their moments, however, and one of these occurred when they arrested a minor Anarchist in a Soho club and took from his pocket a small medicine

bottle containing chloroform. There was a fragment of the original label still attached to it which served to indicate that it had once been in a chemist's shop. The detectives were anxious to obtain the pedigree of the bottle, but they did not make a tour of the chemists' shops in London or anywhere else, realising there were too many of them. They looked for the printer of the label, and eventually their enquiries led them to Walsall to the chemist who had sold the bottle, plus medicine, of course, to a weedy-looking foreigner. Now aliens who seek to dignify their crimes by styling themselves Anarchists are not as a rule fascinated by the amenities of Walsall, and Melville and Quinn conjectured that there was a bomb factory in the Midland town. Consequently, they explored it unobtrusively and proved their theory to be correct. When they descended on the factory and captured it they cut off at one stroke the supply of the enemies' ammunition, and thus the heaviest blow dealt at Anarchism in Great Britain was deftly accomplished. Melville died in 1918 at the age of sixty-six, but his one-time colleague is now Sir Patrick Quinn, and, quite apart from the notable work he did at the Yard, must go down to history as the only detective who rose from the uniformed ranks to a knighthood.

It would be impossible to write of Scotland Yard without giving prominence to the masterful personality of Frank Froest, who by sheer merit rose from uniformed constable to superintendent of the C.I.D. He is now a mere golfer, magistrate and member of the Victorian Order, but it is not long since his name was a terror to evil-doers. I cannot quote more than a few of his achievements, some of which were due to pure reasoning, others to pure force; and Mr. Froest was in his active days a marvellously powerful man. He seldom used his strength, however, but those who mistook the kindly manner for weakness and attempted to overawe him by a display of force had every reason to remember Frank

Froest for the rest of their lives. The first case of world-wide interest with which he was associated was the hunt after the late Jabez Balfour in South America. When the popular embezzler was arrested and hustled into a train the local dagoes declined to work it because they did not wish to lose the employer—Balfour was the owner of a distillery—who paid very high wages. Froest solved the difficulty by turning stoker and he did his duty manfully. It was as much bluff as Extradition law that got Balfour out of the Argentine into dock at the Old Bailey, for in a country where every man preferred to act as his own judge there was very little justice, and the Argentinos were reluctant to see the last of the Englishman who was generous and easy-going.

There was detective ability of the highest order shown by Froest in his solution of a river dock mystery which at one time threatened to bring about the trial of four sailors for murder. Five men from a ship went in search of refreshment and found it so readily that by closing-time the barman had to exercise all the tact which he possessed to induce them to depart, and when they reached the street their spontaneous hilarity was slightly tempered by an inability to control their lower limbs. However, they succeeded in reaching the dock, and they were preparing to go on board when one of their number collapsed in what they assumed to be a drunken sleep. Instantly the humorist of the party suggested that the sleeper should be lifted on to the deck of the ship by means of the crane lying handy, and the suggestion was promptly acted on. The unconscious man was attached by the waist to a rope suspended from the crane, raised on high and deposited on board, but when he touched ground again it was seen that the rope had slipped and that during the latter part of his queer journey it had been tight around his neck. The four practical jokers were not so far gone as to be unable to realise their terrible position when their comrade

failed to respond to their agitated shakings and cries, and when a horrified skipper appeared he had to do his duty and send for the police. The early hours of the morning saw the quartette in cells, and the charge against them was wilful murder.

Frank Froest was sent to investigate and it was expected that his report would reduce the charge to manslaughter by the time the accused arrived at the Old Bailey. The detective, however, took nothing for granted, and he visited the public-house where the drinking orgy had taken place and obtained a complete account of all that the five men had done. Then he inspected the corpse, a long and minute inspection which inspired him to make the astonishing pronouncement that the man had been dead before the rope had been tied around his waist. For Froest had learnt that after hours of heavy drinking the seaman had indulged in a meal of biscuits, and it was the detective's opinion that the food had choked him and that when he had fallen down it was simply because his heart had ceased to beat. It only remains to add that a special medical examination confirmed Froest, and the accused were, to their astonishment, released.

During the term he held office as superintendent of the C.I.D., Froest had under him the most brilliant and successful staff of detectives the service ever boasted. The chief-inspectors included Walter Dew, Elias Bower, John Kane, Alfred Ward, Gough, Fowler and others. It is, of course, impossible in an article to be comprehensive or complete when dealing with such an extensive subject as Scotland Yard, and it would require volumes to recount the sensational cases in which these men took a prominent part. Walter Dew was famous before the Crippen affair made his name known from Tooting to Timbuctoo. He unravelled the mystery of the chief of the late Duchess of Sutherland's jewels—worth £20,000—and his single-handed capture of Harry, the valet, the chief, was a

courageous finale to a problem which he had handled with discretion and tact. Dew's acquaintance with the swell mobsmen was extensive and peculiar, and numerous swindlers who specialised in bogus "prize competitions" were mastered by him. He was the officer who superintended the police arrangements for the exhumation of the body of Thomas Druce, the father of the pretender to the Dukedom of Portland, and a few years later Dew was present at another exhumation, that of the remains of Belle Elmore in a house in Camden Town. Neither experience was a pleasant one, but the second provided him with a triumph, for it was Walter Dew who confronted the fleeing Dr. Crippen, quack, on board ship at Ottawa with the now historic, "Dr. Crippen, I believe?"

His friend, Elias Bower, headed the platoon of police who laboured to secure evidence against Dougal, the murderer of Miss Holland. That crime is remembered as "the Moat Farm Mystery" and was, undoubtedly, one of the most sensational in the history of human depravity. In many respects it was more dramatic and interesting than Crippen's, and it remains unique to this day. Hard work rather than brain-power built up the case against Dougal, but in the Slough mystery Bower proved that he was a born detective. An elderly woman was found murdered in her house and the only clue was a piece of paper, cylindrical in shape, which had obviously been used to wrap up something. That "something" was deduced by Bower to be money, for the impressions on the paper were those of milled coins, and he counted twenty-one impressions in all—nineteen large and two small. Now, just previously to the murder a certain man had been noticed hovering in the vicinity of the victim's house and it was no coincidence that he should have vanished immediately she was dead. Bower went in search of him and tracked him to his lodgings in London. There was very little more than suspicion to inspire the police and the

detective knew that he must produce something tangible if he wished to secure a conviction. He, therefore, made a careful search of the prisoner's rooms, and his patience enabled him to discover a collection of coins at the bottom of a trunk. The total amounted to twenty pounds—nineteen sovereigns and two half-sovereigns—and these were the coins which the old woman had saved and for the sake of which she had been brutally murdered. Thanks to Bower, however, she was avenged by the law.

## CHAPTER XXIV

I HAVE been informed by a recognised authority on Scotland Yard that the active career of a detective averages twenty-five years and that if he is associated with two or three sensational cases during that period he may consider himself fortunate. Judged by this estimate the record of the late Chief-Inspector Alfred Ward is a very remarkable one. He was only fifty when a bomb dropped from a Zeppelin killed him, but he had spent twenty-nine of his half-century of years in the police force, and because of the proof he soon gave of possessing an unusual *flair* for the detection of crime, he took part in the solving of more mysteries than any other of his contemporaries.

It was the notorious Bartlett case which turned Ward's thoughts in the direction of detective work. In 1886 he was a clerk in the City, and in common with nearly everybody else he was greatly excited at that time by the trial of Mrs. Bartlett on the charge of murdering her husband. It was a very mysterious affair altogether, and it was only Sir Edward Clarke's brilliant conduct of the defence which secured the woman's acquittal. Ward followed every detail of the swiftly moving drama with an interest which grew day by day, and when it was all over he found himself rebelling against the monotony of an occupation which seemed to him to promise no future. He mentioned his ambition to become a detective to his father, but he was discouraged, and, consequently, it was not until December, 1887, that Alfred Ward, being of age, and, therefore, his own master, offered himself as a candidate for the Metropolitan Police and was accepted. Shortly



afterwards the ex-City clerk found himself in the familiar blue uniform and patrolling a dismal street in the East End of London.

It would be interesting to learn how Scotland Yard's many famous detectives first gave evidence of that ability which justified their promotion from uniform to plain-clothes. Competition is so keen that luck as well as skill often determines the issue, but in any case Alfred Ward would never have remained long in the ranks, for he was endowed with many of the attributes of the born detective. I heard him refer more than once to what he called his first bit of luck. His uniform was still very new when he caught sight of a young thief who was very well known to the police. Ward surveyed him with a suspicious glare, and noticed immediately that, whereas, his clothes were shabby, he was wearing a pair of boots which were almost spotless.

"Where did you get those boots?" he asked.

"Bought 'em with my own money two days ago," was the aggressive answer, and with the air of one who has a just grievance.

"Let's have a look at them," said the young policeman, displaying that imperturbability which was to stand him in such good stead during the next twenty-five years.

With a scowl the suspect obeyed, and then was flabbergasted when the policeman gripped him by the arm and insisted on conducting him to the station.

In the presence of his inspector Ward pointed out that the boots contradicted the statement by his prisoner that he had purchased them two days previously.

"The price chalked on each sole can still be read," he said, demonstrating as he spoke with the aid of the reluctant thief. "It is possible for chalk marks to remain for a few days, but not if it has been raining for a week previously. It is plain to me that these boots were stolen within an hour or so of my meeting him."

The prisoner was detained while Ward went the round of the numerous pawnbrokers and bootshops

in the neighbourhood, and in a very short time he returned with an indignant tradesman who identified the boots worn by the suspect as his property which had been stolen half an hour before the man was taken into custody.

There were other small cases which he tackled with similar perspicacity before he doffed his uniform for the last time, but once he got his chance he made the most of it. Between those days and his tragic death he was prominently identified with such sensational mysteries as the Clapham Common murder—which resulted in the trial and conviction of Steinie Morrison. The Seddon case, the theft of one hundred thousand pounds' worth of pearls, the tracking of Carl Lody, most famous and most efficient of German spies, and the capture of Trebitsch Lincoln, that rascally German-Jew who actually managed to induce the free and independent electors of Darlington to return him to Parliament as their representative.

I will deal with those celebrated crimes only from the angle of Alfred Ward's connection with them. They are well known to all of us and they have been so often written about that everybody must know the details. When Ward was sent to interview Seddon, the north of London insurance agent who poisoned his lodger, Miss Barrow, with arsenic because he wished to save himself the expense of paying the annuity she had purchased from him, he was fully conscious of the fact that he was tackling a very difficult problem. Seddon's coolness and craft impressed the detective, who guessed that if the man was guilty he would not be convicted unless he blundered, and Seddon seemed to be the last man in the world to lose his head or give away anything to his enemies. Everything in connection with the death of Miss Barrow appeared on the surface to be quite straightforward. The woman's health had never been good, and there was a doctor's certificate to account for her death, and the fact that she had left practically

nothing to her own relations hardly justified suspicion, seeing that there was evidence that she had often expressed her intention not to let them benefit under her will.

As in all the big cases he tackled it was Ward's temperament which enabled him to triumph in his battle of wits against the insurance agent. A well-known London magistrate once described the famous Scotland Yard detective as the most determined man in the force, but a man whose determination never degenerated into obstinacy because it was controlled by a scientific and practical mind.

Ward was, therefore, not likely to abandon an investigation simply because the first half dozen tests to which he submitted his clues failed to produce anything. He was impressed by Seddon's thoroughness, but at the same time wondered why the landlord of Miss Barrow had taken the trouble to store in his brain such minute explanations of every incident, trivial and otherwise, in the life of a woman who was suspected of being poisoned. It certainly appeared as though Seddon expected to be accused of causing the death of his lodger and that he had done nothing himself which he could not explain.

Ward, therefore, worked unceasingly, although for most of the time he seemed to be up against a stone wall, and it was only when the coolest criminal who ever confronted a detective officer contradicted himself in certain small details that he realised he was going to be rewarded for his trouble. Day and night Seddon was shadowed until that afternoon in Tollington Park when the poisoner was stopped by a detective who informed him that Chief-Inspector Ward wished to see him.

There was a sensational trial at the Old Bailey, and that duel between Seddon in the witness-box and Sir Rufus Isaacs, K.C., M.P., will be remembered for many a year by those who witnessed it. What

surprised me most about the trial, however, was the decision of the prosecution not to produce in evidence the collection of newspaper cuttings dealing with the Maybrick case which Chief-Inspector Ward found in a drawer in Seddon's bedroom. They referred principally to the evidence given by the medical experts at the trial of Mrs. Maybrick and they contained a very complete account of the effect of arsenic on the human body. I can well imagine Seddon studying these cuttings before he imitated the method by which arsenic was introduced into the Maybrick house. I refer, of course, to the purchase of certain fly-papers from which the deadly poison was extracted. Ward himself was of opinion that this piece of evidence would have added greatly to the melodramatic touch to the proceedings and given the impression that the police were relying on suspicion rather than proof. He was certain that the jury must convict, and his optimism was justified, though more than one eminent criminologist still believes that the jury took a risk in arriving at a verdict of guilty.

The solving of Seddon's crime may be taken as an example of practical detective work. There was very little of the deductive method in it, and Ward's principal duty was to interview everybody with whom Seddon had come in contact during his association with Miss Barrow. He went from undertaker to chemist, from chemist to one of the accused's own daughters, from the latter to a dealer in second-hand clothes, and so on from one person to another until he had in his possession a dossier of Seddon's life which contained more about him than that redoubtable criminal knew himself. And when a man commits such a serious crime as murder there is always a hiatus in his life-story which exposes his lies and prevarications and leads to his ultimate discomfiture.

Had Steinie Morrison been released from gaol previous to that day in September, 1916, when Ward met his

death, I am sure that the convicted murderer of Leon Beron would have attempted to anticipate the evil work of that Zeppelin bomb, for throughout his trial and during his sojourn in the condemned cell Morrison ascribed all his troubles to Alfred Ward. He ascribed his arrest to spite on the detective's part, and during those maniacal outbursts at Dartmoor and Parkhurst the name of Alfred Ward was often on his foul lips.

For years to come the question of Morrison's guilt will be debated by criminologists. Personally, I think he was guilty, and Ward was so positive that he had made no mistake in the matter that an invitation to discuss the subject was answered by a good-humoured smile. But if the foreign Jew with the British name did not lure Leon Beron to Clapham Common that New Year's eve and murder him there for the sake of his small possessions, he certainly gave the finest display of acting the Old Bailey and our great convict prisons have ever seen. The spectators of his trial were undeniably impressed by the disdainful and contemptuous manner which he adopted towards the prosecution.

They might have doubted his guilt if Morrison had not offered too many explanations of his whereabouts on the night of the murder. For example, his chief alibi—he had more than one—was that at the moment Leon Beron was being murdered on Clapham Common he, Morrison, was robbing a bank miles away. This was a stupid lie because it was easy enough to prove that no bank in London had been robbed at the time mentioned or within forty-eight hours of it, and, as Ward put it, a desperate criminal tells you more by his lies than by speaking the truth.

It was Ward who created that network of evidence from which Morrison could not escape at the Old Bailey. The detective, by working eighteen hours a day, had narrowed the issue down to a personal acquaintance between the prisoner and his victim. He found the cabman who drove the two men to the lonely common,

and he brought forward the witnesses who proved that Morrison had known Leon Beron well enough to be aware of the fact that he carried all his savings on his person. To some people it may appear incredible that in twentieth-century London a man can be found capable of planning a very cold-blooded murder in order to become possessed of about thirty pounds and a gold watch and chain, but the criminal annals contain evidence that the paltriest motives more often inspire the greatest of crimes. Morrison averred that he was a victim of Ward's anxiety to solve a puzzling murder mystery and so gain promotion, and when news of the detective's death reached him in gaol the convict exclaimed, "The Germans have avenged me, and so they have done one good deed at least." A little more than four years later Morrison himself died as the result of his experiments in self-starvation.

It was Ward's opinion that the most difficult problem to solve is not as a rule the murder mystery but a burglary or, judging by his experiences, an anonymous slander case. There is a trophy at Scotland Yard called the Howard Vincent Cup which is presented every year, to the detective who achieves the most notable success during the previous twelve months. Alfred Ward won it by his brilliant work in connection with the Sutton anonymous libels affair. From time to time we hear of epidemics of anonymous letters, but the Sutton one would hold the record were it not for the recent Littlehampton outbreak. There had been several attempts to trace the writer of the letters before Ward went down to Sutton, and every known device had been employed to trap the criminal.

There was, as usual, not a single clue to go upon. Ward explored Sutton and decided half a dozen persons, four men and two women, might be able to throw some light on the mystery. But when he came to gathering nets about them he was informed by the local police that each one of them had been a victim of the slanderer.

That caused the detective to go over his ground again, and owing to his cleverness in seeing at once a valuable clue which others considered worthless he narrowed down the issue to a woman and a man, and determined to build his case on them.

It was laborious and very often irritatingly monotonous work, but he was determined to succeed, and he actually had every postage stamp on sale in Sutton secretly marked. Not content with this he arranged that the proprietors of the two stationers' shops near the residence of the suspects should mark their notepaper and envelopes so that they could be identified later if necessary.

His plan succeeded admirably. The most disgraceful anonymous letter was brought to Ward by its recipient, and not only did the stamp bear the mark which proved its sale to a certain woman in the neighbourhood, but the notepaper and envelope confirmed it, and the woman was arrested. Ward promptly crossed the other name off his list because he knew he had ended the scandalous state of affairs which had caused terrible discomfiture in and around Sutton.

Curiously enough, the woman had been almost the first to complain to the police of the anonymous slanders, but at her trial it was proved that she must have written them to herself in order to put the authorities off her track. She was convicted and sent to prison, and Sutton enjoyed a calm which was very welcome after many months of stress and anxiety.

They gave Ward the Howard Vincent Cup, but he did even better work during the war, for he was a terror to German spies. He had many amusing as well as dramatic interviews with the secret emissaries of the Fatherland, but he never forgot his encounter with Carl Lody, the fanatic who regarded spying as a sacred calling and considered himself the benefactor of his countrymen. One of the quaintest rascals the detective came across was the German hairdresser, who

for ten years received five pounds per month from the German War Office for sending them "secret information" concerning Great Britain's navy. This particular "spy" was not executed—he was merely interned—because during the whole of the ten years he had forwarded to Berlin facts and figures copied from Whitaker's Almanack! He was at the other extreme to Lody, but the information supplied by the latter was hardly much more useful than that sent by the crafty hairdresser. Lody, however, had a remarkable personality, and his bravado when complaining of being shadowed by detectives was superb even though it was perfectly unnecessary. He ought to have been clever enough to know that Scotland Yard had penetrated his disguise of peaceful neutral and that Alfred Ward was only waiting for the right moment to perform an act which must have for sequel the shooting squad at the Tower of London.

But in the long run Germany avenged the execution of Lody by murdering from the air the man chiefly responsible for the doom of their most renowned spies. Alfred Ward's death was indeed a tragedy, and the public as well as Scotland Yard lost the services of a great detective. He was only fifty when he died, and, personally, I have never met a younger-looking man of that age or one so physically fit and mentally alert.



## CHAPTER XXV

CHIEF-INSPECTOR JOHN KANE was an Irishman of the type which never finds its way on to the stage or into a novel, but, nevertheless, is a characteristic product of its country. Dour and dogged, very reserved in manner, possessing only a meagre sense of humour, he was so devoted to his profession that during the forty years he was in the police force he never took a real holiday. It was said of Jack Kane at Scotland Yard that he was never happy unless he had a grievance, but in spite of certain temperamental eccentricities he was very popular in the service.

Three years in the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary convinced Kane that there was no scope for him in an organisation which was officered by public school and university men, and so he came to London, took his turn in the street as a uniformed constable, and then achieved his ambition by earning promotion to Scotland Yard. From that time onwards he was engaged in many of the biggest cases which came before the criminal courts, and he gained a reputation which might have secured the blue riband of the C.I.D. had there not been a certain Frank Froest to stand between him and his goal.

The first startling affair in which Kane took part is still remembered for various reasons. In the course of his duties at the "Yard" the detective was instructed to visit Grafton Street, a not too prosperous thoroughfare in Bloomsbury, and ascertain if possible whether there was any truth in the rumour that a certain man who had suddenly disappeared had been the victim of foul play.

"I never expected anything to come of it," said Kane, when discussing the case afterwards, "for in those days I seemed to spend all my time proving how apt Londoners are to imagine the worst without any reason for it, and even when I came upon a large trunk on a barrow outside the house which was supposed to be the scene of the crime it took me a few moments to guess that there might be something in the trunk as well as in the rumour."

The detective, however, did himself less than justice, for, according to the evidence at the trial, he instantly made himself known to the two men who were handling the trunk and ordered them to return it to the house.

"It's only luggage, guv'nor," they protested. "Look at the label. It's addressed to Berlin."

"I'm going to see what's inside it," snapped Kane, and realising that the safest course to pursue was that of obedience, they carried the trunk in.

No sooner had he entered the squalid sitting room on the ground floor than a door opened at the back of the house and a woman rushed out, but it was into the arms of a detective stationed there by Kane, who had given the signal after a glimpse at the trunk.

Officers of the C.I.D. must be prepared for anything, but when Kane prised open the lid of that trunk he had the biggest shock of his life as the corpse of a man shot up into a sitting position like a veritable jack-in-the-box.

Trunk murders have not been uncommon since the Grafton Street mystery startled the town, but it remains unique because it is the only case on record where a woman has been charged with a crime of this description. When she was committed for trial her solicitor, not being able to afford the luxury of retaining the services of one of the great leaders of the Bar, looked around for a promising junior and, as his client subsequently had every reason to appreciate, was fortunate enough to decide that a barrister of the name of Edward Marshall Hall was the best man for his money.

Sir Edward, as he now is, has more than once recalled his feeling of utter hopelessness when the brief was handed to him and he was asked to save the woman from the hangman. The evidence at the disposal of the prosecution seemed overwhelming and the facts collected by John Kane appeared certain to lead to a verdict of wilful murder. But once in court he persevered and he actually persuaded the jury to reduce the charge to one of manslaughter, and his client was sent to penal servitude instead of to the scaffold.

There were many other difficult and important problems solved by John Kane before that summer day in 1907 when, after more than one Cabinet meeting and special conferences between the Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary for Ireland and other statesmen on one side and King Edward on the other, he was chosen from amongst the leading men at the "Yard" to proceed to Dublin to investigate the mystery of the loss of the Crown jewels.

"I will have no scandal," said King Edward, who was deeply moved by the unfortunate affair, "but the jewels must be found and returned."

Kane was selected because he was an Irishman who had served in the R.I.C. and also because he was known never to use two words where one sufficed. He was, therefore, the right person to be taken into the royal confidence and to be entrusted with state secrets, and I had his own assurance that when he set out for the Irish capital he was confident of success.

Never before has a detective mingled with so many exalted personages as John Kane did during his stay in Dublin. Of the score of alleged purloiners of the jewels only one did not bear a title, and it was even suggested to him that a certain lively countess had disguised herself as a man and had opened the safe in Dublin Castle and now had the jewels hidden. As the lady had been on the Continent at the time of the robbery the detective merely added her to his record of

human curiosities and turned his attention to more likely clues. But from first to last he was hampered by a mass of illogical and ridiculous information and suspicions out of which it was impossible to make anything. The robbery itself was so simple that it simply bred complications. Dublin Castle was then the Scotland Yard of Ireland, and yet a safe in an inner office had been burgled and priceless jewels carried off ! The very audacity of the *coup* was the chief reason for the immunity of the thieves.

One of these days, though not in the lifetime of the present generation, the full story of the Dublin Castle burglary may be told in print, and then it will be appreciated why it was John Kane was unable to solve the biggest problem of his career.

But when the average detective is struggling with a case in which the reputations of people of European eminence are at stake he scarcely has a chance to get at the truth. There are too many interests to be guarded and too many state secrets to be kept from the light of day.

"I might have solved it," said Kane in one of his rare whimsical humours, "if there had not been so many amateur detectives in Dublin and if there had not been so many clues."

Whenever John Kane spoke of the Beck case he did so with a quiet satisfaction which was unusual in view of the fact that the detective did not claim it as a personal triumph. It was, as he described it, a piece of luck and nothing else, but at the same time Sir Edward Henry was delighted with the way Kane made the most of that chance visit to the Tottenham Court Road police station to rectify that amazing series of errors perpetrated in England between 1895 and 1904. When Kane walked into the station he had no idea of the sensational sequel which was to follow on his visit. He was simply there to inspect the latest arrests and to see if there were any wanted men and women

amongst them, but when the inspector told him that there was a man in one of the cells charged with offences similar to those for which Adolf Beck was at the moment awaiting sentence he was struck by the coincidence and wondered if, after all, the Norwegian, who had already served a term of penal servitude for frauds on women, had been the victim of a terrible miscarriage of justice. He promptly interviewed the prisoner and, although he did not get much out of him, the shrewd detective, who had nearly thirty years' experience of criminals behind him, discovered sufficient to warrant dropping of all other business until he had obtained a complete history of "John Smith." To cut a long story short, Kane proved that all the offences with which Adolf Beck had been charged and of which he had been convicted by two juries had been committed by this "John Smith." These and other facts came out more fully during the commission appointed by the Home Secretary to enquire into the martyrdom of Adolf Beck, and I believe Kane's satisfaction was due to the feeling that he was the only Scotland Yard detective connected with the case who could say he had not blundered. Kane differed from certain of his eminent colleagues in never assuming too much and declining to regard a person as guilty merely because he was a prisoner. A study of the report of the commission will convince anyone that whenever Scotland Yard makes a mistake it is due to this stereotyped frame of mind. In the Beck affair nothing was done simply because ten women of more or less doubtful character identified Beck. There was not sufficient imagination at the headquarters of the C.I.D. for anyone to realise that it is possible for a score of witnesses to be mistaken honestly.

Shortly before he died at the Middlesex Hospital in 1909 Beck told me that the men who had saved him were George R. Sims and Chief-Inspector John Kane. Beck went on to express his gratification that Kane

had not suffered through exposing the errors of his chiefs, but the dour Irishman would have tackled much more formidable personages once he was convinced that he was in the right.

It was previous to this triumph that he brought to justice Frank and Laura Jackson, beasts of prey who invented a bogus religion which they termed "The Theocratic Unity." It was a snare for the credulous and the unwary, and it brought about the ruin of many young girls. The woman, an intensely ugly creature of elephantine proportions, actually convinced several young women that she possessed semi-divine powers and that she could bring fame, fortune and health to her followers. This is the case known by the name she gave herself, "The Swami," and twenty years ago it filled columns of the newspaper for days, while the story was being unfolded at the Old Bailey. When Kane was giving evidence, and it was his evidence which convicted the beasts in the dock, the female prisoner often interrupted him with curses and threats, for she was the head and leader of the conspiracy, the male being wholly submissive to her.

"You are paid to tell lies," she shrieked, clawing at the air with her fat fingers, but Kane had proof of each of his statements, and the victims of the "Swami" who went into the witness-box one after the other and who formed a pitiable procession of broken lives were but the prelude to a verdict of guilty and long terms of penal servitude.

A perusal of the list of the principal cases in which John Kane was engaged indicates that he was often occupied in dealing with matters which required the utmost discretion and most careful handling. That was why whenever anyone of good social position sought the assistance of Scotland Yard it was Kane who went to his rescue. In the last Parliament there sat a wealthy gentleman, the owner of a large estate, and a man who, had he wished, might have obtained a

seat in the Cabinet. Twenty years ago he was a well-known man about town with a weakness for accepting strangers at their own valuation. That was probably why he found himself one day in the meshes of a blackmailer, and his position was all the more desperate because the blackmailer was a man of education and resource and utterly fearless of any consequences to himself, and prepared to murder rather than submit to arrest.

When Kane had heard the whole story he advised him to write to the blackmailer making an appointment to meet him and discuss the matter. The proposal was readily accepted and the place of venue was a room at the top of a house in Great Ormonde Street, but it was John Kane who was admitted and not the wealthy country gentleman on the afternoon fixed for the meeting.

Meanwhile the educated blackmailer who had once been the most popular boy at a very expensive public school, prepared himself for every emergency. He was no fool and he had a profound knowledge of the world, and he suspected that his victim might call to his assistance Scotland Yard, in which case there would be complications.

When, therefore, he saw Kane enter the room, the blackmailer at once identified him as a detective.

"You are from Scotland Yard?" he said, thrusting a hand into the left pocket of his coat.

Before he could withdraw it Kane was on him, and a life and death struggle ensued. The Irishman was in perfect physical condition, but the blackmailer seemed to possess the strength of ten, and more than once it seemed certain he would free the hand which was holding the revolver. The weapon was the prize for which they strove, and had Kane's fingers weakened he must have met his death there and then. He was, indeed, so exhausted when at last he reduced his enemy to a semi-unconscious condition that he was unable to assist the policeman to convey his prisoner

to the station. But he had the satisfaction of seeing him sent to penal servitude for ten years by Mr. Justice Hawkins.

There was very little of the spectacular in the once famous "Mile End Guardians Affair," but Kane performed notable work in exposing that notorious fraud on the ratepayers. He was engaged on it for weeks and he had to don so many disguises that, as he confessed with a laugh, it made him feel like the detective of fiction. In turn he was street loafer, bricklayer, barman with a fondness for discussing football, and insurance canvasser—to mention a few of his impersonations—but the result was a personal triumph and a blow struck in the cause of honesty in public life.

It was more exciting shadowing a well-known German criminal who came over to London in the suite of a Prussian princeling. The rogue, who styled himself baron, had obtained his official appointment by threatening to expose the princeling's past, and owing to the hard and fast rule which allows complete immunity to the suite of a royal visitor while on foreign soil the detective could not arrest him. Aware, however, that the impostor intended to make what use he could of his opportunities in London, Kane persuaded him to decamp back to Germany by threatening to apply for a warrant. It was a source of satisfaction to the detective to hear later that the "baron" had been convicted and sent to prison for seven years in Germany for a series of frauds perpetrated on widows of wealthy tradesmen.

Towards the close of his career he had an encounter with a very pretty woman, the wife of an officer in the Indian Army, which he never forgot because it convinced him that had he failed to arrest her, then she would have progressed in crime until she had become the most dangerous female swindler in Great Britain. By raising the rank of her husband from captain,



which he actually was, to general, she obtained a furnished flat in the West End at a rental which she could not possibly have paid, but once she was installed at a fashionable address it was easy enough not only to obtain expensive clothes and even jewellery on credit, but to get regular supplies of food.

But when she took to cashing cheques drawn on a bank where she had never had an account, Scotland Yard got to hear of her existence, and Chief-Inspector John Kane went to investigate.

"There must be someone impersonating me," she said, at their first interview, "I have heard something of what you have told me. But you will agree with me that it is not likely that the wife of a general in the army could be capable of such mean frauds?"

Kane discreetly evaded answering the question, and went off professing himself satisfied, but he had only called to make the personal acquaintance of the lady so that if ever he had legal evidence that she was guilty of the alleged swindles he might take the right person into custody.

There was no doubt that she was a lady in the usual and accepted sense of the word and that her husband was an officer in the Indian Army. Furthermore, she had relatives occupying high positions in the Civil Service, and one of her uncles was governor of a colony. Kane was aware of all this and it behoved him, therefore, not to jump hastily to conclusions and also to be wary to distinguish between debts which could only be made the subject of civil action and debts so incurred that only a criminal court could deal with them. With his usual foresight and dogged thoroughness he collected the evidence, and, having satisfied himself that the woman was a very dangerous swindler, he presented himself for the second time at the luxuriously furnished flat.

The door was opened by a neatly-dressed maid whose highly coloured cheeks were in strong contrast to the

pale beauty of her mistress, though as the hall of the flat was not lighted it was difficult to see her features.

"My mistress is in her bedroom, sir," said the maid, when Kane requested to be shown into her presence, "If you will wait a minute in the drawing-room she will come to you."

"Thank you," answered the detective, turning in the direction of the door on the left which the girl had thrown open.

He was not in the least perturbed at the prospect of having to wait, and neither did he anticipate the lady escaping his clutches, for he had, of course, taken the elementary precaution of stationing colleagues at the back and front of the block of flats.

The maid stood aside to permit him to enter, but to her amazement he caught her by the arm.

"You are the person I want," he said, quietly.

"How did you know I had changed clothes with my maid?" she said, unable to restrain her curiosity when at the police station she was informed that she was to be kept in a cell until brought up before a magistrate.

"Your disguise was a pretty good one," said Kane, gravely, "but when you made the exchange you forgot to remove two valuable diamond rings from your fingers, and they gave you away. Domestic servants don't as a rule sport rings worth ten years' wages."

The ingenious lady was convicted and sent to prison, and did not profit by her punishment, for her name cropped up more than once in the police courts during the war.

John Kane retired from Scotland Yard in 1911, and four years later he passed away at his house at Ilford, and, although the attention of the world was engrossed by the tragedy on the Continent, there were many old colleagues who were quite startled even in an era of death and destruction to hear of the passing of a detective who had done so much in his time to maintain the prestige of Scotland Yard.

## CHAPTER XXVI

**WHEN** the jury failed to agree to a verdict at the first trial of Mrs. Flora Fanny Haskell, of Salisbury, charged with the wilful murder of her only son, and it was decided that she should be tried again, Mr. Justice Darling came down specially from London to preside when the case was re-heard at Devizes. It was felt that a stronger judge than Mr. Justice Ridley was required to take in hand one of the most difficult of crime problems, and accordingly Sir Charles superseded him.

The story told in the opening speech of Mr. Foote, K.C., for the prosecution, was a very remarkable and pathetic one. The woman in the dock was good-looking and only thirty-four, and the person she was alleged to have murdered was her son, Teddy, an affectionate, intelligent and popular lad who had been handicapped by the loss of a leg. The boy had been devoted to his mother, and there was plenty of evidence to prove that she had been very good to him and had never neglected him. Mother and son lived alone, Mrs. Haskell being a widow, but Mr. Foote suggested that from the day she became engaged to a steward in the "White Star" Line she resented Teddy's presence in the house, fearing that her future husband might object to the expense of keeping him.

This was merely surmise, however, for the case was so complicated and the difficulty of finding a motive so great that Mr. Foote was compelled to make guesses, being fully aware that up to the day of the murder the prisoner had been on the best of terms with her twelve-year old son. However, it was necessary for the prosecution to advance some reason why the kind-

hearted mother should have suddenly committed such a ferocious and cruel crime, and, taking the accused's engagement as a foundation, Mr. Foote built his case on it.

It was suggested that when the widow became engaged she wanted to be rid of Teddy, but those who knew the boy laughed to scorn that notion. He was, despite his crippled condition, an attractive and cheery companion, and that he was sensible beyond his years was proved by the fact that instead of spending whatever money came his way on sweets and other boyish delights he carefully saved it with the object of buying himself an artificial leg so that he might dispense with crutches. Mr. Foote told the crowded court that altogether Teddy had saved eight pounds which he kept in a drawer in his bedroom.

"The boy's savings are an important factor in the case," declared Mr. Foote, "for only three persons knew of their existence, and they were the prisoner, her mother, and the murdered boy. The poor child would not confide in anyone else. The eight pounds meant everything to him—freedom from crutches and the possibility of one day being able like other boys to play football. He was looking forward eagerly to the time when he could throw his crutches from him, and to hasten it he deprived himself of all childhood's pleasures, worked hard, and was elated if he could add something to his store. You can picture the boy's pleasure as he saw his savings grow; you can realise how anxious he was to be of more use to his widowed mother, and you can fancy his joy on his last day on earth when as he went to bed he reminded himself that he had eight pounds of his own."

It was a chilly October evening when Teddy Haskell, after kissing his mother good night, dropped off into the refreshing slumber of boyhood. He had had a busy day but he was as cheerful and hopeful as ever, and his last smile was for the mother he loved.

About an hour after Teddy had gone to bed a play-fellow of his called to deliver a message to him. He knocked twice before the door was opened, and when Mrs. Haskell appeared she promised to convey it to her son who was then asleep and could not be disturbed. The boy wished her good-night and turned away, but a few seconds later he heard someone screaming, and immediately the street in which the Haskells lived was roused.

"Somebody has murdered my Teddy!" shouted Mrs. Haskell, in a perfect agony of grief and terror.

The neighbours gathered round her while two men rushed upstairs to the room where the boy slept, and when they came in sight of the bed they recoiled with exclamations of horror and pity, for Teddy Haskell's throat was cut and he was quite dead. Even in death, however, the child's habitual expression of good-humour had not disappeared. It was plain that he had died in his sleep and with no foreboding of his fate, because his hands were not clenched and his features were undisturbed.

The murder of the inoffensive boy at once was ascribed either to a lunatic or a thief, and the drawer was promptly searched where the precious eight pounds had been kept. Now only three pounds ten was found; the balance, four pounds ten, having disappeared.

Here was a motive which at first sight seemed to explain everything, but a little calm reflection quickly destroyed its value. Why should the thief have contented himself with only a portion of the money? It was all in coin and, therefore, untraceable. Again, why should the thief have troubled to murder a sleeping boy who was quite unconscious of the loss of his savings? In any case a cripple of twelve would have been helpless against a resourceful and unscrupulous robber, who would have to be a brainless fool to take his life.

Meanwhile, friends were sheltering Mrs. Haskell, whose blouse and skirt were covered with bloodstains,

and as soon as she could speak coherently she told a very remarkable story.

According to her she had been sitting in the kitchen when she heard footsteps on the stairs, and hurrying out she was terrified by the spectacle of a strange man gripping a bloodstained knife in his right hand. The instant he discovered that he was observed he flung the knife at her and dashed out of the house. She had raised the alarm at once and the full extent of the tragedy was laid bare though she had been unable to secure the capture of the miscreant.

The local police quickly set to work. There was no doubt that Teddy Haskell had been murdered. That was plain enough. The difficulty was to determine the identity of the murderer, and the mother, having been in the house when the tragedy took place, suspicion fell on her and she was arrested.

In view of the difficulties the case presented Scotland Yard was appealed to, and one of its cleverest and shrewdest officers, Chief-Inspector Walter Dew, was sent to help in the investigation, and with several of the best Salisbury officers he worked hard to piece together the story of Teddy Haskell's death.

Almost the first thing the authorities did was to test Mrs. Haskell's statement. She had explained that the bloodstains on her blouse and skirt were caused by the knife which the assassin had thrown at her. Dr. Pepper, the Home Office expert, declared that many of the stains could not have been due to contact with a falling knife. The police had also found bloodstains on the kitchen floor and the cloth on the kitchen table. Clearly they could not have been the result of the knife-throwing exhibition by the unknown murderer, and the question arose, how did they get there?

These things coupled with the peculiar action of the thief in leaving nearly half the money behind him seemed to make the case for the prosecution impossible to

demolish. But one story is good until another is told, and the defence had a lot to say when its turn came.

It should be mentioned that when the murder was discovered those who were personally acquainted with Mrs. Haskell emphatically declined to believe in the possibility of her guilt. She was quite an inoffensive woman who was liked and who was regarded as a model mother. Her affection for her son was common knowledge. Owing to his lameness he had been the object of more than ordinary maternal love and protection and mother and son had been real pals. Neighbours recalled how she had worked hard for the sake of her fatherless child, and it was incredible to them that all of a sudden she should become a fiend and murder in cold blood the lad whose arms had been around her neck and whose lips had touched her own an hour previously.

When the inquest was held the jury had great difficulty in arriving at a decision. Some of them knew Mrs. Haskell by reputation and they shrank from branding her even for a short time with the stigma of murder, and it was only the necessity of bringing in a verdict that compelled them to record that Teddy had been murdered by his mother in a condition of temporary insanity.

But it was undoubtedly a case for a jury. Teddy Haskell had been murdered and the weapon was an ordinary tableknife which looked as though it had been specially sharpened for the purpose, and that knife was said to have been the property of the boy's mother. Obviously the whole matter had to be threshed out.

Mr. Foote's speech was restrained and unimpassioned. He was not in love with his task because no one who had seen the pathetic figure in the dock could avoid a feeling of pity for her. If she were guilty it was easy to see that her devices to cast suspicion on another were absurdly ineffective. Only a woman whose brain

had gone would have dreamed of concocting her story—supposing it was untrue.

The defence was mainly based on the absence of an adequate motive. If Mrs. Haskell had not been shown to have been a good mother there would have been no difficulty in deciding her guilt, but Mr. Goddard made the most of the fact that there had never been the slightest suggestion that up to the day of Teddy's death she had ever ill-treated him. It was true enough that Mrs. Haskell had been contemplating a second marriage and that the boy might possibly have been temporarily regarded as an incumbrance, but a little reflection weakened that contention. The boy had been popular and had possessed the knack of gaining the affection and confidence of his elders, and it was more than likely that his mother's second husband would grow to regard him as he would a son of his own.

Counsel pointed out that it is absurd to expect a woman who has just realised that her only child has been murdered to act rationally. Mrs. Haskell, he contended, had received such a shock that she was incapable of doing anything which would help her to trace the murderer. She had declared that she had followed the strange man who had thrown the knife at her and had kept him in sight for several seconds, but owing to her excitement she had not then called out after him although there were many persons indoors who would have been willing and able to afford her assistance.

Then again the notion that she coveted the lad's eight pounds and that she overcame her maternal instincts and killed him for the sake of that small sum was too grotesque to be entertained. It would not have been difficult for Mrs. Haskell to have obtained the money from her son by other means. She could have borrowed it; she could have asked him for it, and much as he longed for the artificial leg to enable him to play football and indulge in other sports, it is



reasonable to say that he would have given up his savings to the mother he adored.

British juries rightly shrink from basing a verdict of guilty on circumstantial evidence only. There have been too many cases in the past where the strongest proof of this nature has sent an innocent person to the scaffold. Within the last half century there was one instance in a British possession, Malta, where a man was found stabbed to the heart in a side street and standing over the corpse was another man with the knife in his hand with which the deed had been done.

The latter was arrested, put on trial, convicted and executed, and it was not until some years later that the truth became known. The unfortunate prisoner had been absolutely innocent, and it was just a coincidence that he was found in the suspicious position that lost him his life. It seemed that he was a baker's assistant and that early that fatal morning he had been on his rounds when he saw a little way ahead of him two men quarrelling. Suddenly one of them drew a knife and stabbed the other to the heart, immediately afterwards taking to his heels. Petrified at first by horror the spectator of the crime had not moved, but regaining the use of his limbs he had rushed forward to see if he could render any assistance. Stopping down he had from humanitarian motives dragged the knife out of the body and then realising that the stranger was dead he had fallen into a reverie and had stood staring at the figure on the ground. At that moment the police came up and took, as they thought, the assassin almost in the very act. In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that there was a verdict of guilty and that the prisoner's protestations of innocence should have passed unheeded. Nevertheless, he was, as we have seen, a victim of circumstantial evidence, and only one of the many at that.

It would be easy to multiply such cases, and doubtless there were men on that first jury which tried Mrs.

Haskell who recalled some of them and as a result would not agree to a verdict. At the second trial Mr. Goddard eloquently appealed for the acquittal of his client. She had been all that a wife and a mother ought to have been, and, he contended, it would be very dangerous to say that she had turned murderer without any motive.

In addition to explaining away the bloodstains found on the prisoner's person and on the kitchen table-cloth and floor it was necessary that the defence should deal with the knife with which the deed had been committed. Now this was an ordinary table-knife and the prosecution said that it was the property of the accused. The defence tried to counter this by pleading that it knew nothing whatever about it. The table-knives that Mrs. Haskell owned were of a type common all over Salisbury and could be matched in thousands of households throughout the country. Counsel reminded the court of a murder trial in which the prisoner's guilt seemed to be proved by the presence of certain twine used in tying up property alleged to have been stolen from his victim. The authorities maintained that the twine was peculiar and could not be bought anywhere in London, but the other side produced evidence that the same sort of string was on sale in a dozen shops in Whitechapel and that balls of it were to be found in Birmingham and other provincial towns. That led to the acquittal of the prisoner.

But in Mrs. Haskell's case it was not so easy to dispose of the bloodstained knife and Mr. Goddard had to treat it very discreetly. That it had been sharpened within forty-eight hours of the crime was plain, but there was nothing to show that Mrs. Haskell had been responsible for the sharpening—indeed, it was not clearly traced to her possession.

Mr. Justice Darling indicated that the knife was the principal clue and that if the prisoner could explain

satisfactorily that she had not seen it until the alleged murderer had flung it at her there would be an end of the prosecution. His lordship, anxious to have the mystery solved, appeared to be under the impression that Mrs. Haskell would enter the witness-box and submit herself to cross-examination, but Mr. Goddard did not call her for the defence, and in his summing-up the judge commented on his failure to do so.

The final speeches on both sides were extremely eloquent and greatly impressed a crowded court. Mr. Foote, K.C., spoke as though a conviction was a certainty, and the circumstantial evidence against the accused was admittedly strong. She had been in the house at the moment of the crime; the knife used was of the same pattern as those in her kitchen; she was marked by the blood, and it was impossible to maintain that the throwing of the knife at her in the narrow hall had caused bloodstains to appear on the kitchen floor and the cloth on the kitchen table. The eminent barrister hinted that he was surprised that the first jury should have disagreed. Circumstantial evidence might have led to miscarriage of justice in the past, but, he said, unless we accepted the principle involved, nine out of every ten murderers would escape unpunished.

Black as the case seemed to be against Mrs. Haskell when Mr. Foote concluded, counsel for the defence proceeded to demonstrate that there were numerous inherent weaknesses in it, and that he would be a bold man who would convict on it. All that could be said on behalf of the prisoner he advanced, and those of us who hoped that the shrinking creature in the dock might prove her innocence after all found fresh courage in the brilliant and logical speech of Mr. Goddard.

Mr. Justice Darling is one of the few judges who can deal with an important case without reading notes all the time. A single glance at the documents before him and then he goes right on, never omitting a point or

failing to alight upon the omissions or commissions of prosecution and defence.

"Gentlemen," he said, towards the end of his summing-up, "I had hoped that the accused would have gone into the witness-box and given us an explanation of the knife with which the murder was committed. But, of course, her counsel knew best and did not call her, and I will leave it at that."

When the summing-up was concluded and judge and jury had left the court a regular buzz of conversation ensued. The general opinion seemed to be that Mr. Justice Darling expected a verdict of guilty, but there were some who said that the jury would not run the risk of sending a woman to her death on circumstantial evidence which had been negatived to a considerable extent by the weakness of the motive alleged.

The sounding of the bell intimating that the jury had arrived at a verdict sent a thrill of excited anticipation through the court, and soon afterwards the twelve men had filed into the box and we were all giving our strained attention to the foreman as he rose to answer the vital question put to him by the clerk of the court.

"Not guilty!"

A sigh of relief swept across the court as if a burden had been lifted off the shoulders of everybody in it.

Five minutes later the crowd was streaming out and everybody was discussing the result of a most sensational trial.

## CHAPTER XXVII

**THE** crime of Moses Hatto belongs to the category of farmhouse murders. We are told that cities breed criminals, but a long list could be compiled of murderers who have been tempted into committing the greatest of crimes by the loneliness of the country and the false sense of security which the evil-doer finds in isolation. The police are far away; there are no witnesses; no adjoining houses whose occupants can hear the screams of their victims, and if flight is decided upon as the sequel they know that they will have a long start before the law gets on their track.

Fortunately, despite these advantages, few murderers have escaped. But this is the story of a man who did not run away, because he trusted to his own cunning to save him. A farmhouse murder has a peculiar effect upon the public. When such an awful crime is committed amid a small community, where everybody knows everybody else, and all are supposed to be banded together for self-protection, it is akin to treachery and mutiny.

Burnham Abbey Farm was in the possession of Mr. Ralph William Goodwin in the year 1853. He was a bachelor, and employed a housekeeper, named Mary Ann Sturgeon, who was thirty-six years of age. She slept in the farmhouse, and the only other servant who occupied a bedroom was Moses Hatto, the groom and stableman. Thus only three persons slept in the roomy old farmhouse, though not far away there was a cottage where the farm labourers were boarded. The building stood near the Old Bath Road, and within four miles of the royal borough of Windsor. There

seemed no reason to suspect that the farm would be the scene of a murder which would shock the country. Mary Sturgeon was a placid woman, devoted to her work, and if she did not like Moses Hatto she was not the only one who had not taken to the stocky, red-eyed groom with the surly manners. But as Hatto's hatred of the housekeeper never went further than sulky looks and inaudible growls, the housekeeper did not trouble to get rid of him. Hatto was a slovenly worker, but he suited Mr. Goodwin's requirements, for he was apparently very honest and obliging when Mary Sturgeon was not near him.

It was Mr. Goodwin's custom to spend two or three evenings a week at the house of a friend about six miles away. He always rode there and back, and it was part of Hatto's duties to wait up for his master, so that on his return he might take his horse into the stables. Sometimes Mr. Goodwin did not return until after midnight; now and then he appeared before eleven struck. Moses Hatto was always waiting for him, the only person awake on the premises, for Mary Sturgeon generally retired about ten.

On the day of the crime Mary Sturgeon was in a bad humour. Hatto was, in her opinion, more than ordinarily lazy and stupid. His habit of coming straight from the stables into the house created more work for her, and when he transgressed that morning she sharply ordered him not to put in an appearance unless he was clean. She also made him sweep up a passage he had soiled with his dirty boots. The farmer was at the time near at hand, and Hatto, knowing that he had purposely tramped about the house in his heavy boots, dare not disobey. But he treasured up every insult the woman flung at him, and whenever Mary Sturgeon glanced at him unexpectedly she saw the dark eyes glowing and the heavy mouth twisted and ugly.

She did not pay any particular attention to these signs of Hatto's bad temper, and it never occurred

to her that when her employer rode over to his friend's house six miles off she would be in a position of great danger when left alone with Hatto after dark. Perhaps it was the knowledge that the cottage in the yard contained half a dozen men who would rush to her assistance if she called them that enabled her to regard the groom's threatening looks with equanimity.

Shortly after six that evening Hatto brought Mr. Goodwin's horse round to the door, and held it while his master mounted.

"I may be late, Hatto," said the farmer, preparing to ride away. "Don't fall asleep as you did the other night."

Hatto touched his forelock, standing for several minutes whilst he watched horse and rider disappear.

Had he already planned the murder of the housekeeper? Had Mr. Goodwin's reference to being late influenced him in deciding upon that night for the commission of the crime which had been slowly maturing in his dull, heavy brain? He swore afterwards that he had not, but his crime must have been premeditated, even if it was carried out in a clumsy manner.

Mr. Goodwin left at a quarter past six, and Hatto was either in the stables or chatting with the farm-labourers until half past eight. During that time he did not see Mary Sturgeon, and even when one of the labourers grinningly remarked on the housekeeper's dislike for Hatto, he made no response.

He was aware that Mary Sturgeon's aversion from him was the common talk of the farm. That was one of the principal reasons for his murderous hatred of the woman, for Moses Hatto had a morbid dislike for criticism, however justifiable.

At half-past eight Hatto went indoors for his last meal of the day. According to the law of the Burnham Abbey Farm, the groom was entitled to a pint of beer with his supper. It was an old established

custom, and Moses Hatto had always approved of it. He was particularly fond of his beer, and a pint of it that night might have softened him. On many other nights he had drowned his grievances in his allowance of beer, but to-night, by a strange fatality, the housekeeper, who was, of course, responsible for distributing the food and drink, only drew half a pint. The reason for this was never discovered, but it may be reasonably supposed that it was due entirely to an accident. She could not on her own authority have deprived Hatto of his allowance. An appeal to Mr. Goodwin would have led to the housekeeper being reprimanded, and Hatto was ever on the look-out for a ground of complaint against her. All along it had been a battle of wits between the housekeeper and the groom, and the woman, being sharper-witted and scrupulously honest, had never conceded or lost a single point. She had made herself invaluable to her employer, and day by day Moses Hatto was slowly realising that if Mary Sturgeon demanded his dismissal—threatening her own resignation if refused—Mr. Goodwin would not hesitate to sacrifice him.

With a surly face Hatto sat down at the kitchen table, and the housekeeper brought his supper beer. The groom saw that it was only half his usual quantity, and in that moment his fury became maniacal. Mary Sturgeon, unconscious of the crisis she had created by her unfortunate curtailment of the groom's drink, busied herself collecting the silver which had been used that day. It was her custom to take it into her bedroom every night for safety.

Hatto's eyes followed her about the kitchen. Every moment he was feeling less able to resist temptation. He knew that the walls of the farmhouse were thick, and that if he got a decisive blow in before she was aware of it he would prevent her screaming and rousing the inmates of the cottage.

Slowly he rose to his feet. It was now after nine.



The housekeeper was making her inspection with a view to satisfying herself that all was well before retiring for the night. Hatto walked towards the door leading to the passage where Mary Sturgeon was standing. When he appeared she moved into the larder room, not deigning to notice the groom's existence, for she was finished with him for that day.

He went to the door of the larder room and looked in. The housekeeper had her back towards him. Here was his opportunity, and the next moment he seized a larder-beater, raised it, and brought it down upon her unprotected head. The woman staggered, turned, and read death in the eyes of the frenzied ruffian. With a shriek she darted into the passage, ran through a doorway, and reached the foot of the stairs leading to her room. Taken aback by her vitality, when he had expected the one blow to render her unconscious, Hatto stood staring. Then, as if realising that her escape would mean arrest and imprisonment, he rushed after her.

The terrified woman, though weak and bleeding, managed to reach the door of her room. In a few bounds Hatto was beside her. The sight of him produced a paroxysm of fear that robbed her limbs of life, and she sank in a huddled mass. The ruffian, who had dropped the larder-beater downstairs, did not hesitate. He entered the room, seized the poker and killed her with it.

All this time there were half a dozen sturdy farm hands within twenty yards of the crime, but not one knew of the awful tragedy which was taking place so near them. Hatto listened for a time, standing over the body of his victim as he did so. Not a sound disturbed the stillness of the night.

What was he to do now? Fortunately for himself he knew that Mr. Goodwin would be late. It was about half past nine. If he worked with caution he might succeed in diverting suspicion from himself.

He was not a clever man, and it was well that he was not, for his only chance of escape lay in flight, and he did not realise that. He imagined that he could save himself by making it appear that the housekeeper had been burnt to death owing to an accident.

Dragging the body into the woman's bedroom, he set the clothes alight, and then proceeded to break up a chair and a small table to add fuel to the flames. Having inspected the beginning of his handiwork, he went downstairs to reconnoitre. There was blood on his clothes, for Mary Sturgeon had struggled valiantly, even in her death throes, and he went to his room and changed, burning part of his coat, but, eventually, making three small parcels of his clothes, to enable him to dispose of them more easily next day.

Few men could have sat so unperturbed in the farm house as Moses Hatto did half an hour after his crime. He took up his usual post to wait the return of his master, although he must have smelt the burning flesh and furniture, and his brain, dull as it was, must have dwelt continually on the tragedy and what must come of it. But he was so absolutely sure of escaping detection that he never doubted his own safety, and when he heard Mr. Goodwin's horse clattering down the road he went out to wait on his master, showing no traces of fear or excitement.

Mr. Goodwin dismounted and turned into the house. The murderer, hastily locking the horse in its stable, went indoors, where he found the farmer standing sniffing.

"What's the matter, sir?" he asked, innocently. "Has anything happened?"

"What's that horrible smell, Hatto?" said Mr. Goodwin, impatiently. "Surely you smell it, too! Is the house on fire?"

"I don't smell anything, sir," said the groom stolidly, but by now Mr. Goodwin was running towards the staircase at the end of the passage.

Hatto hesitated whether to follow him or not, and it was not until a cry of horror from the farmer reached him that he raced up the stairs and burst into the room, to fall back with a gasp of terror as he saw for the second time the mangled remains of the unfortunate housekeeper. In a few moments the inmates of the cottage in the yard were awakened, and every hand was pressed into service to search the farm for the murderer or for clues that might lead to his capture. Hatto diffidently suggested that the housekeeper had fallen into the fireplace and had been burnt to death, and that she had only herself to blame.

"Don't be a fool, man!" Mr. Goodwin cried, angrily. "Do you think that if a woman is going to fall into the fire she first breaks up the furniture to make the flames bigger? Murder's been done, and the ruffian must be found. Look at the wounds. Why, here is the weapon with which she was killed." He drew the poker out of the fire, but Hatto was only telling himself what a fool he had been to break up the furniture, and he did not hear the farmer's last few words.

Naturally, Hatto was the first person suspected. Mr. Goodwin cross-examined him at length, but the groom stoutly declared that he had never left his own room, where, as usual, he sat up to wait for him.

"You didn't hear a sound?" exclaimed the farmer, incredulously. "But the murder took place within a few paces of you. There must have been a desperate struggle. Mary Sturgeon must have called for help. Surely you heard her cries?"

He sent one of the labourers into the housekeeper's room and ordered him to call for help. Mr. Goodwin and Hatto remained in the latter's room, and both heard distinctly the moderate volume of sound made by the labourer. This disposed of Hatto's contention that he had not heard any suspicious sounds between nine and ten, when the crime was committed, but he adhered to his first statement.

"I once went out to lock up a colt which had broken loose, master," he said, stolidly. "Bunce will bear me out."

"But the struggle and the murder couldn't have taken place inside a few minutes," said the farmer, "and then there's the horrible smell. It's extraordinary that you heard nothing, and that you can give us no information."

When the police were summoned, Hatto was again examined. He contradicted himself many times, and every moment he must have expected to hear the dread words announcing his arrest. But, extraordinary as it may seem, he was not taken in charge, and when he locked himself in his bedroom in the early hours of the morning he congratulated himself on his cleverness. He was free—his self-confidence had been justified, and Mary Sturgeon would never be avenged. He slept soundly and peacefully, until a loud knock on the door summoned him to begin another day's work.

It is more than probable that if Hatto had been arrested immediately the crime was discovered he would have succeeded in securing his acquittal. In English law there is no middle course between "guilty" and "not guilty," and in the case of a trial for murder juries have to be extremely careful, for if a mistake is made it cannot be rectified. All the evidence against Hatto was purely circumstantial, and his instant arrest would have prevented him making those blunders which eventually led to his conviction.

He was, of course, well aware that he was the object of suspicion. Everybody knew that he had been on bad terms with the murdered woman, and it was general knowledge that he was the only person in the farmhouse at the time of the murder. Nevertheless, the police did not arrest him, and Hatto, with amazing composure, went about his duties at the farm the day after Mary Sturgeon's death, utterly unmoved by the fact that he had yet to dispose completely of his blood-stained clothes.

When a favourable opportunity presented itself, he stole out of the house and buried them in unfrequented spots. For some reason he did not at first dispose of his shirt in this way. The sleeves were stained, and, as there was a river near by, he went to it with the intention of throwing the shirt in. At the last moment, however, as he stood on the river bank, he remembered that the shirt would assuredly float, and so he buried it under a tree, and returned to work.

Meanwhile, the news of the awful crime had spread. Farmers rode and drove in from the surrounding country to view the scene, and on all sides hopes were expressed that the villain would be caught.

What could have been the motive for the murder? Everybody asked that question. Mr. Goodwin declared that he missed nothing; therefore, robbery could not have been the criminal's object, although Moses Hatto, accepted as an authority by strangers because he resided in the house, was of opinion that burglary was the motive, and that Mary Sturgeon had been killed in an attempt to defend her employer's property.

"They have taken something, I'll be bound," said the groom several times to other employees. "At present master is too upset to be able to tell for certain if anything's gone."

This was, of course, a direct change of opinion, since the night before he had stated that Mary Sturgeon had been accidentally burned to death. But Mr. Goodwin's curt rejection of such an absurd theory had impressed the murderer, and now he staked his reputation on robbery as being the motive for what appeared to most persons to be a senseless crime.

Twenty-four hours after this the farmer did miss a few small articles. Two pencil cases and a couple of gold rings were not in the little box in the chest of drawers in the housekeeper's room. Hatto was triumphant when the loss was discovered, and he wore

a pleased "I-told-you-so" look that impressed the labourers.

Mr. Goodwin, however, was not to be tricked. He had made a thorough search of the housekeeper's room soon after his tragic discovery, and he had then seen the pencil cases and the rings. Was it possible that the murderer had returned to steal a few articles not worth in the aggregate five pounds? It was absurd to think that a criminal would risk his life in the circumstances.

"The disappearance of the rings and pencil cases merely prove that the murderer is very near us," said Goodwin to Hatto. "He can't be far off. Perhaps he may call again."

Suspicion of Hatto deepened. The wretched man, outwardly confident—perhaps displaying a little more assurance than was necessary—began to feel that the noose was getting uncomfortably near him. All his hopes deepened now on the theory of robbery, and to heighten the illusion he disguised himself and called one night at the railway station office at Maidenhead—three miles off—and asked for a small parcel.

For some quaint reason he purposely behaved suspiciously, anxious to give the porter something to talk about, for if it was rumoured that a strange man had called for a mysterious parcel the country folk would put two and two together and believe that the stranger was the burglar and murderer the police were looking for. However, from all accounts it seems that the porter scarcely took any notice of Hatto, only gruffly informing him that there was no parcel for him or for anybody else. After that the official appears to have proceeded with his work, and it was only at the subsequent trial that he troubled to recall the incident.

The other farm servants were, naturally, profoundly depressed by the crime. It was a harrowing experience for them all, and they went about their work in fits of silence, and when they spoke it was in whispers. The shadow of the crime fell upon all of them—all

except Moses Hatto. He looked the whole world in the face, and was as cheerful in his demeanour as he had hitherto been sullen and morose. Of course, Hatto's manner was assumed. He knew that he was a murderer, and he was afraid that if he behaved like the others he would be arrested, his depression being ascribed to remorse and fear. Therefore, he acted, as he thought, like an innocent man would have done, but his very assumption of carelessness and cheerfulness was anything but natural. It called attention to him, for he was the only farm-hand who was not sorrowing for the murdered woman. The police knew that he was acting a part, and if they did not "shadow" him closely enough their apparent weakness was justified later, when the murderer stood in the dock at the November Assizes.

Meanwhile, the public clamoured for the police to find the murderer. The terrible fate of the hardworking housekeeper, the scene of her death—a lonely farm in one of the fairest districts in England—and the horrible attempt to burn the body convinced them that this was a case which the country could not afford to have placed in the list of unsolved mysteries. The murderer must be found; and moved by the public clamour, the police acted.

Hatto was working in the stable-yard when he was arrested. The heavy footfalls of the police did not attract his attention, and he never turned his head until a hand gripped him by the arm and a voice said that he was under arrest on a charge of wilful murder. Then he stood up and faced his captors with an insolent grin.

"You're making a mistake, mates," he said, with a hoarse laugh. "I never touched her, I swear that."

He was conveyed to the nearest gaol, and when the news of his arrest was published there were millions of honest folk who were convinced that Mary Ann Sturgeon's death would be avenged at last. But Moses Hatto possessed certain qualities which stiffened his

back now that he was face to face with death itself. He knew that the evidence against him was only circumstantial. No one had seen him murder the housekeeper, and he was certain that if he maintained his innocent demeanour he would convince the jury that it would be wiser to acquit him than to run the risk of hanging him on evidence based on conjecture.

From the first moment of his arrest, therefore, he never exhibited the smallest fraction of fright. He continued to speak contemptuously of his accusers, and his general air of bravado impressed not only his gaolers but also many of those who clamoured for his detention. They argued that an uneducated groom could not maintain a bearing of such conscious rectitude if he were guilty, and the fact that he never let slip an incriminating word impressed those who had nervous doubts about the advisability of finding a man guilty on circumstantial evidence alone. Hatto had the best legal assistance, and his committal for trial did not lessen his confidence that he would be acquitted.

The trial at the assizes was confined to the reasons why the prisoner was suspected. His presence in the farmhouse when Mary Sturgeon was murdered; his known antipathy to her; his declaration that he had not heard a noise although he had been sitting within a few feet of the actual scene of the crime; his unnatural cheerfulness and his visit to the railway station in search of an imaginary parcel, all these points were enumerated and emphasised by the prosecution, who asked the jury if they reasonably connected the prisoner with the crime.

During the trial Hatto's bravado was very noticeable. He took up the attitude of a man who defies his foes to do their worst. He was absolutely innocent, he said, and his vulgar self-confidence, though it offended many in court, yet undoubtedly impressed the majority.

As the law then stood, Hatto could not give evidence, and this was in his favour, for had the prosecution



been able to cross-examine him there can be no doubt that he would have been convicted out of his own mouth.

The defending barrister made a brave attempt to smash the arguments of the prosecution, and he did his utmost to work upon the feelings of the jury, dwelling eloquently upon the grave danger of convicting a man of a crime which no one had seen done, and citing well-known cases from the past where men had been convicted on circumstantial evidence and executed, only to have their innocence proved when too late. That it was a difficult case everybody admitted, and there were some sympathisers with the murdered woman who were afraid that Moses Hatto was going to escape. They firmly believed in his guilt, but they knew the weakness of the prosecution's case.

It was expected that the jury would take some time to consider their verdict, but as the hours passed, and the judge was not summoned from his private room, the rumour went round the court that the most the prosecution could hope for was that the twelve good men and true could not agree. The chances were that the verdict would be "Not guilty," and if that happened, then Moses Hatto would go free for the remainder of his life, and even if he confessed his guilt he could never be tried again.

But at last it was announced that the jury had agreed to their verdict, and never did a restless and crowded court buzz with excitement as did the one which waited breathlessly for the foreman's answer to the clerk of the court's question, "How say you, guilty or not guilty?"

Moses Hatto leaned forward in the dock to listen. He was excited now, and the sinister face was a trifle paler. Would his great bluff win the day, or had all his bravado been in vain?

"Guilty, my lord," said the foreman in a low voice, and a murmur of relief went round the auditorium.

Hatto had failed, for the jury had resolved to take the risk of convicting him on the evidence they had heard.

The wretched man smiled insolently at the judge who sentenced him, never flinching, and leaving the dock without assistance, still, apparently, confident and unperturbed. But hope was dead within him, and as he was passing from the dock to the cell which he was not to leave until summoned by the hangman, he was making up his mind to confess. That same day he sent for the governor of the prison, and there and then he told the story of Mary Sturgeon's death, beginning from the time when she had placed his supper beer before him on the kitchen table, and ending with directions where to find the buried bloodstained clothes and the stolen pencil cases and rings.

The police instantly tested his confession, and with little difficulty unearthed the incriminating garments, and when Moses Hatto went to his death the world knew that circumstantial evidence had not failed to bring to justice as remarkable a villain as the countryside had ever bred.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

**I**N the annals of crime there is no more amazing story than the life and adventures of Pierre Coignard, the famous French criminal. During a period of fourteen years he experienced every variety of fortune, becoming, in turn, convict, soldier, burglar, the favourite of a king, the head of a gang of thieves, the commander of a regiment and, finally, a convict again, to die in prison in 1835 at the age of sixty-one.

In 1791, at the age of seventeen, Coignard was sent to Paris by his father to learn the trade of a hatter. He was of small stature and mean countenance, and had had very little education, and for a couple of years he served his apprenticeship, but the times were war-like, and he turned soldier with a million others to help to drive the invaders from the soil of France. The task accomplished, Coignard left the army, but not with the intention of resuming his apprenticeship. He had changed his ideas altogether. The careless life of a soldier had convinced him that an indoor life would be unbearable, and his experiences as a servant of a rich officer had awakened in his mind dreams of wealth which would enable him to live luxuriously and occupy a position that would make his friends and acquaintances envy and admire him.

For a few weeks he debated as to how he could obtain money. The trade of a hatter was out of the question, for had he not borrowed a few pounds from his former master, and was not the latter continually pestering him for repayment? Such meanness, he argued, proved that a hatter was never in any danger of making a fortune. Pierre thought the matter over, and decided

that the best way to achieve his ambition was to turn burglar. He must have had a peculiar talent for thieving, as from the first he was more than ordinarily successful, despite his youth and his lack of experience in the burglary line.

One night he broke into the house of a rich tradesman in a suburb of Paris, and although the householder was awake, Coignard petrified him with a glance from his small black eyes, and then proceeded coolly to ransack the rooms. He came away with about a hundred pounds in gold and silver, and the unfortunate wine merchant never saw his money again.

This was a good beginning, from Coignard's point of view, and when the money was gone, being spent recklessly and lavishly in order to impress his low-class friends in the worst resorts in Paris, he planned another burglary and brought it off successfully. Three more followed, all on his own. Coignard was now rich for one of his position, but he did not attempt to pay back his former master the money he had borrowed from him.

Emboldened by success, he became more daring. He lived luxuriously and posed as a man of birth. The mean appearance remained, of course, and he could not atone for lack of education, but his fine clothes and air of authority, aided by his generosity with other people's money, won him a certain consideration, and he was invited out to dinner and to dances.

Once he drove up in a carriage to a lawyer's house in a fashionable street, dressed as befitted his assumed rôle of gentleman. There was to be a dinner followed by a dance, and Coignard, who was on the look-out for a wealthy wife, fully expected to find one here. But the only result of his visit was catastrophe.

When he arrived his host hurried forward to greet him, and then half turned to beckon to another guest to approach so that he might be introduced to the wealthy young man who had come to Paris to enter

the very best society. Unfortunately for Coignard, the other man was the tradesman he had robbed on the night he had begun his career as a burglar.

Recognition was instantaneous. Coignard attempted to escape, but was captured. A few weeks later he stood in the dock of the Criminal Court and heard his sentence—fourteen years' hard labour.

It was a sudden *débâcle* which might have broken anyone's heart, but Coignard was a man who feared nothing. He had muscles of steel, could climb like a monkey and outmatch in strength men six feet in height, though he was less than five feet four inches, and he never lost faith in himself.

"I will be a great man," he said, many times to the convict to whom he was chained. "The world shall hear of me. I was not born to die in obscurity."

The other convicts, hearing him boast, would jeer at the little man with the insignificant features. If ever criminality was stamped on a man's face it was on Pierre Coignard's. They knew that that alone would make him an object of suspicion to the police wherever he went. Still, he amused them with his ceaseless chatter, and very soon his personality was the most talked about thing in the prisons.

For five long years Coignard laboured as a convict, chained day and night to another ruffian, living like an animal amid animals, subsisting on coarse, ill-nourishing food, and risking his life very often. But he never forgot the great world outside, and one evening when he was working on the dock at Toulon he seized the opportunity for which he had waited so long.

The warder standing near him turned to chat with a friend, confident that the sea was better than a thousand prison walls and that escape was impossible that way. But he reckoned without Coignard.

The convict sprang into the sea, dived under the water and swam for a couple of hundred yards, rising only when necessary to gain his breath. He searched the

sea for a likely vessel, but he was afraid to select one at random, and with incredible daring he actually swam back to land, stepping ashore a quarter of a mile from the dock. There he concealed himself until darkness fell, and soon after midnight he found a captain of a sailing ship who took pity on him and offered to convey him away from France.

Thanks to the kindness of the captain, Coignard reached a little village on the coast of Spain, and there he parted from his friend. But his position was a precarious one, even if he was free. He had no money, and he could not speak Spanish, and the villagers looked askance at the queer little man in shabby clothes. No one would give him employment, and when Coignard was driven to ask for work his plight must have been desperate.

But luck came to his rescue. He was walking away from the local inn, where a request for credit had been refused with threats of personal violence, when he came upon a pretty maid-servant, who was sobbing to herself.

Something impelled Coignard to address her. She answered him in French. Great was his joy. At last he had found a human being who could speak his language. The girl was of French nationality, and inside ten minutes they were friends. Coignard told of the hard life of a sailor, and Rosa was more than sympathetic.

"But I have trouble, too, my friend," she whispered, with tears in her eyes; "my poor dear master, the Count Pontis de Sainte-Helene, is dying. He has no friends or relations in the world. I alone am with him, and when he is dead I shall be quite friendless."

"I will be your friend, Rosa," said Coignard, ingratiatingly. "Let me look after you."

It was in this way that the short courtship began. That night the count died, and in return for his servant's unselfish nursing during his last illness he bequeathed her all he had. It was not much—a few hundred francs

—about twenty pounds—and an old casket containing the count's papers.

"A dealer offers two hundred francs for the old casket, Pierre," said Rosa, who was now engaged to the escaped convict. "It is a good sum and it shall be my dowry."

"Let me see what's in it first," said Coignard, and proceeded to examine the contents. There were papers giving the full official record of the late count—his commission in the army, his patent of nobility, his passports and various other important documents. Pierre's brain worked actively for a few minutes.

"We won't sell that casket, Rosa," he said, with a meaning smile, "for to-morrow you and I will be married, and then we will leave this place as the Count and Countess Pontis de Sainte-Helene. See, these papers will prove my identity. I shall be received everywhere as the real count. We shall move in the best society. Isn't that better than a couple of hundred francs?"

"I will do anything you tell me to, Pierre," she said, in a rapture, "and I will go anywhere with you, for I am sure you are the cleverest man in the world."

The programme was carried out. Pierre and Rosa were married, and as count and countess the escaped convict and the maid-servant departed from the little village by the sea to seek their fortunes. Fighting was then the universal profession, and Coignard offered his services to the army of Spain. They were accepted, but later, when Napoleon sought fresh fields to conquer, the adventurer crept back to the French Army.

No one questioned his title of count, and one of the greatest of French marshals instantly granted him the rank of major in one of his best regiments. He gained half a dozen decorations, and during that eventful period added laurels to the name of Pontis de Sainte-Helene.

Rosa, the ex-servant, bore her rank with a dignity which greatly helped her husband. It was astonishing how effectively they played their parts. From the moment he had donned the title of count, Pierre Coignard's meanness seemed to disappear. His face lost its hang-dog look, his mouth became firm and his eye steady. He carried himself well, and no one in the army suspected for a moment that the popular officer was not all he claimed to be.

Sometimes Pierre and Rosa gave little dinners in the neighbourhood of battlefields whose names are renowned in history. Pierre's aristocratic air and Rosa's perfect manners—she had learnt a lot from the real count when in his service—impressed and charmed everybody. The "count's" fame was noised abroad. It reached Paris, where it delighted thousands of impoverished aristocrats who were proud to know that the representative of one of the oldest families in France was distinguishing himself.

But the time came when the wars in Spain and Portugal ended, and Pierre's regiment was ordered back to Paris in 1814. He accompanied it, for he was now its second in command. He was received by the king, Louis XVIII, who promoted him to the head of his battalion and decorated him with an order reserved exclusively for those who could prove aristocratic descent for at least four hundred years. The "Count Pontis de Sainte-Helene" was, of course, received everywhere. His Majesty, impressed by his manner, actually hinted that if the count found his expenses too great in Paris he was to draw on the Royal treasury.

This was the state of affairs after the downfall of the great Napoleon. Coignard and his wife were favourites of the restored king. Everything in their garden of life was lovely with one exception, but, alas, this was the most important of all. They had very little money, and Pierre was not the man to live economically. Rosa, too, agreed that their splendid friends must be enter-



tained in return. And his pay as colonel of his regiment would not keep them a month at the rate they were living.

Coignard solved the problem in his own peculiar fashion. He recalled those far-off days when he had been successful in burgling. He had made money easily then. Why not adopt the old profession again?

Their position was most critical the day they entertained a large party to dinner. Two sides of the table were lined by well-known generals, diplomats, statesmen and their wives.

A famous general leaned across to say something to his host, and as he did so he brought into closer view a jewelled cross studded with diamonds, the insignia of an order of nobility. There were other jewels glistening on the general's breast, and Coignard, owing to his knowledge of the army affairs, was aware that the general must have just received his salary. That was enough.

A few days later Rosa called on the general, who was flattered by this mark of attention. In her brightest manner the "countess" entertained the old soldier with her artless chatter, while two rooms away Pierre appropriated everything of value he could lay his hands on. Jewelled crosses, rings, ready money and even the gorgeous state uniforms, only worn on great occasions, were packed in a bag and carried away.

The booty was disposed of to a jeweller, who was a receiver of stolen goods, but the proceeds quickly vanished into the pockets of Coignard's most pressing creditors. It became necessary to steal again, and Coignard planned an attack on the War Office. It was not difficult for him to put a confederate in a position to obtain a wax impression of the keys of the cabinet which held the gold and silver ware used at the state banquets given by the king's ministers.

A day after, Coignard interviewed the man in charge of the apartment where the old cabinet was. He drew him into conversation, alike intimate, charming and

interesting. The official was flattered by the attentions of the famous Count Pontis de Sainte-Helene, the soldier who had won the king's regard. He was delighted when the "count" took him by the arm and walked with him towards the principal exit from the War Office. There the "count" paused again to make his farewell. He was longer than usual, but the official scarcely noticed the passage of time. He bowed and smiled, and then hurried back to his room. When he reached it the door of the cabinet was open and every piece of gold and silver was gone.

Pierre Coignard was greatly upset when his friend reported the loss, and he was most assiduous in his efforts to help to find the thieves. He went to the police himself with various "clues," all of which caused a waste of time and energy, and led the officers of the law away from the right track. But they could not afford to ignore the advice of the aristocratic soldier; and while they were following up his "information" Coignard manufactured fresh supplies of falsehoods daily. The stolen property was sold through the usual channels, and Pierre and Rosa were in a position to give more resplendent dinners and balls.

They had several servants, as befitted their position. There was Rosa's maid and Pierre's valet, in addition to chef, housemaids and a couple of footmen. But when the latter were called up for the army the "count" did not replace them. He handed over the management of his household to his valet, for Rosa was too great a lady to do anything but appear in society. The valet was Pierre's brother, Alexander!

With his brother's help Pierre organised a small band of clever and resourceful burglars. Their operations were directed by the bogus count, who was received as an honoured guest in every great house in Paris, and who could get impressions of keys, or even steal the original keys and hand them over to his confederates. By these means they secured goods to

the value of hundreds of thousands of francs, and the "count" entertained lavishly, until not to know him was to admit oneself to be out of the fashion.

Alexander was always the respectful, quiet-mannered valet, and no one ever saw him take the slightest liberty with his master. Now and then, for the sake of effect, Pierre would soundly rate him for his alleged carelessness in the presence of a visitor, and Alexander would depart in apparent dudgeon, only to laugh in the privacy of his own room at the comedy they were playing.

But how long would it go on? The conspirators must have often asked themselves that question, but as month after month passed and their position, instead of weakening, became more secure, they must have persuaded themselves that discovery was impossible. But it was nearer than they imagined.

King Louis ordered a review of his troops, and announced that he would personally inspect them. It was to be a holiday entertainment for his Parisian subjects, and every soldier was expected to appear at his best. Amongst them, of course, was the Count Pontis de Sainte-Helene, lieutenant-colonel, commanding the Legion of the Seine. Pierre Coignard dressed with especial care for the review, aware that the king would take special notice of him. By now he had lost all fear of exposure. For three years Paris had accepted him, and during that time he must have been seen by several persons who had known Pierre Coignard, the young apprentice. Besides, there was his brother Alexander to draw attention to the likeness between him and his master. Yet no one had noticed it. It was impossible to conceive of any further tests of his safety.

Riding at the head of his regiment he passed before the king amid the plaudits of a huge throng. Nearly everybody knew the identity of the lavishly decorated officer, but here and there a stranger to the capital

had to ask his name. One of these, a ragged, evil-looking man, weak from the lack of food, caught sight of Coignard, started back in amazement, and then questioned a bystander.

"That's the famous Count Pontis de Sainte-Helene," was the answer, given no doubt, in a tone of pride. "He fought in Spain and Portugal, and is now one of the richest men in Paris."

The tramp was too surprised to thank his informant, and he hurried off, keeping the horseman in sight.

The review over, Coignard returned to his home, quite oblivious of the fact that the tramp was hovering in the vicinity. Five minutes later Alexander Coignard told his brother that a stranger of doubtful appearance wished to see him, and would not go away unless the interview was granted. The "count" scarcely hesitated.

"Show him in," he said, standing before the window, with one hand lightly touching his sword. He was under the impression that he was about to receive a message from a member of his gang of criminals.

The stranger came in slowly, half-dazed by the splendour of the room, and a little nervous at the sight of Coignard's uniform, but when the door closed behind him he regained his courage.

"Don't you remember me, Pierre?" he asked, with an ingratiating smile. "I am Darius, to whom you were chained at Toulon. You know me. A man isn't chained to another for years without remembering him for the rest of his life."

Pierre Coignard's hand gripped his sword hilt fiercely.

"You are mad," he said, angrily, "I am the Count Pontis de Sainte-Helene."

"You are Pierre Coignard," the tramp answered, confidently. "And you recognise me. I can see that. Won't you help your old comrade in the Bagne?"

Pierre walked across the room and flung open the door. Calling to Alexander, he ordered him to turn the intruder

out of the house. The order was obeyed promptly, and Darius, ex-convict, was thrown ignominiously into the street, and the door banged behind him.

Darius was now animated only by a desire for revenge. He realised that Coignard would never admit his identity to him, and he went straight to the Minister of Police and told him his story. That official passed him on to the General in Command of the Forces in Paris, and Coignard's superior officer.

The "count" was instantly summoned into the presence of the general and confronted by Darius, who repeated his story and added many circumstantial details. Coignard laughed him to scorn, and offered to produce papers proving his identity. To this the general had to agree, for the tramp had no proof of his amazing statement.

Nevertheless, General Despinay was inclined to believe Darius. Once suspicion was aroused there were many oddities in the "count's" behaviour to deepen it, and though the general allowed Coignard to return home to get his papers he took the precaution to send him in charge of an officer and two soldiers. They were ordered to keep the "count" in sight all the time.

In an emergency Pierre Coignard was a mixture of coolness and unreasoning terror. On this occasion he walked with the officer and talked contemptuously of the charge against him, and when they entered the house, leaving the two soldiers on guard outside, Pierre calmly took his companion straight to his wife and told her what had happened.

Rosa was terribly upset, and her tears quickly gained the sympathies of the officer ordered to keep her husband under observation. By some means Coignard must have been able to indicate to her that she must play a certain part. How he managed to do so was never known, for the officer was never out of the room in which the "countess" sat.

"I will get my papers from the next room, captain,"

said Coignard, going towards the inner door. "Pray, do what you can to console my poor wife. She is worrying more than I am about this absurd affair."

When she was alone with the officer, Rosa's spirits revived, and she began to chatter in her most fascinating manner. Her visitor listened and forgot the passage of time. Suddenly, he thought of his prisoner. An hour had gone by. He rushed into the inner room. It was empty. Pierre Coignard, unwilling to face the music, had decamped.

The arch-impostor went straight to the home of one of the principal members of his gang of burglars. No one associated him with such low-class criminals, and the police never thought of seeking him there. His arrival amongst his fellows marked the beginning of a long series of burglaries. Private houses, banks and institutions were robbed of money and other valuables. The Paris detectives imagined that they had to deal with a score or more of criminals acting independently of one another. They never thought that four men working under the control of the bogus count were responsible for them all.

It was then that Vidocq, the celebrated detective, was called in. He had been a thief himself, and he had been a convict, too, like Pierre Coignard. Now he was the head of the secret police, and nearly every success he achieved was due to a personal knowledge of the underworld acquired when he had been a criminal himself.

A member of Coignard's gang was arrested during a daring attempt to rob a bank. This person, however, did not betray the names of his comrades in crime, but Vidocq, by the merest chance, discovered the all-important fact that the wanted "Count Pontis de Sainte-Helene" had been concerned in the attempt on the bank. That was a most vital clue, for hitherto the detectives had been searching for Coignard, not as

an active burglar, but as a reformed one who was living in provincial obscurity.

King Louis was informed, and instantly gave orders that as little publicity as possible should be accorded the impostor. It would not do to let the whole world know that the man the king had honoured was an escaped convict who could scarcely write his own name.

Vidocq laid his plans carefully. He guessed that sooner or later Coignard would seek an interview with his wife, and he had Rosa watched. She did not suspect what was happening, but the night Coignard stole into the little passage at the side of the house Rosa was not waiting for him. By now she was in gaol, for Vidocq had come to the conclusion that she was too dangerous to be left at large. Pierre Coignard, ignorant of his wife's arrest, softly called her name. It was answered by a detective, who sprang at the ex-convict's throat.

For only a moment Coignard was taken aback. Then he levelled his pistol and fired twice, injuring the man. In the hand-to-hand fight that ensued the detective won, and finally Coignard, exhausted by a long tramp, and weakened by the combat, sank to the ground unconscious. He was roughly restored and taken to prison, and there for nearly six weeks he was left in solitude, while the prosecution prepared their case against him.

But he offered a resolute defence. He swore that he was not an escaped convict, and declared that his persecution—as he called it—was inspired by jealousy. Various witnesses recognised him as the young man who had been apprenticed to the Parisian hatter, but Coignard seemed to have an answer ready for every question, however awkward, and there was a time when it was more than likely that he would be acquitted.

The king, however, put his influence in the scale against him, and the ex-convict was first declared to be

Pierre Coignard and then tried on the charge of having escaped from prison.

Once his real identity was established he had, of course, no defence against the second charge, and, in due course, he was found guilty and sentenced to penal servitude for life, being taken back to the prison at Toulon from which he had escaped fourteen years previously. When next he left it he was a corpse.

THE END





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